



The Franciscan Times

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

Pace e bene

Summer 2026

Eight Ways to Embrace Action & Contemplation

~ Celebrating 800 Years of St. Francis (1226-2026) ~

Andrew Twiddy (Companion), Photos by Andrew Twiddy, Photography Model Keelie Twiddy

Here are eight opportunities and resources for action and contemplation, and for peace and goodness, to celebrate the year of the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St Francis (3 October 1226)

Action 1

Remember to play! Do something simple and for fun, every day. Sing, dance, move!

Contemplation 2

Take some silence and solitude, and make use of this simple daily Franciscan affirmation, a summary of the principles of the *Society of Saint Francis (Anglican Communion)*:

In the morning: This morning, in many forms, I embrace prayer, study and work.

In the evening: This evening, in many forms, I embrace humility, love and joy.

If you feel moved to do so, add in your own movements and gestures to embody your intention.



Action 3

Remember, we are kindred to beauty itself, and to all of nature – talk to your family, the animals and the plants! [Be sure to also listen.]

Like St. Francis, you could talk to the birds and the four-leggeds.

Like St. Anthony, you could talk to the fish.

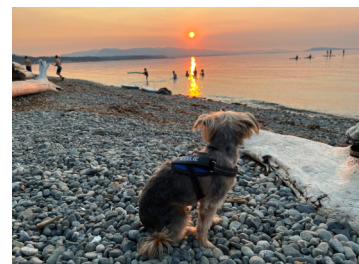
Like King Charles III of the UK, you could talk to the plants and trees.

Action and Contemplation 4

Celebrate the *Feast of Creation* (1 Sept.) and the *Season of Creation* (1 Sept. – 4 Oct.), contemplatively, liturgically, and in practical action! Here are some ideas and resources: seasonofcreation.org



Do something barefoot! Interact with nature, spend time outdoors, connect your feet to the earth, the sand, the sea!



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is a publication
of the Third Order
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Province of the Americas

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

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

♦

Eight Ways (cont.)

Action 5

Explore the rhythm of life in the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis (TSSF) – thirty brief notes to read through, or one-a-day for a month:
tssf.org/about-the-third-order/the-principles/

Contemplation 6

Practice going beyond a dualistic mind to reach a unitive and contemplative mind:
cac.org/daily-meditations/moving-beyond-our-binary-minds/
and to explore further: cac.org/daily-meditations/

Action 7

Walk with intention. Perhaps even go on a pilgrimage or a mini-pilgrimage!

Take an electronic pilgrimage: visit all our Franciscan provincial websites online, and explore the various resources:

anglicanfranciscans.org/index.php/links tssf.org tssf.org.uk
spiritoffrancis.com



Action and Contemplation 8

Just as Francis said, 'I have done what was mine to do', celebrate the 800th anniversary year by embracing your unique vocation at this stage of your life ~ discover '*what you need to do now*'!



Oito formas de conciliar ação e contemplação

~ Comemoração dos 800 anos de São Francisco (1226-2026) ~

Andrew Twiddy (Companheiro), Fotos de Andrew Twiddy, Modelo nas fotos: Keelie Twiddy

Aqui estão oito oportunidades e recursos para unir ação e contemplação, paz e bondade, em celebração ao ano do 800º aniversário do Transitus de São Francisco — sua passagem desta vida, em 3 de outubro de 1226.

Ação 1

Lembre-se de brincar! Faça algo simples e divertido todos os dias. Cante, dance, movimente-se!

Contemplação 2

Separe um tempo para o silêncio e a solidão, e use esta simples afirmação franciscana diária, um resumo dos princípios da Sociedade de São Francisco na Comunhão Anglicana:

De manhã: "Nesta manhã, de muitas formas, abraço a oração, o estudo e o trabalho."

À noite: "Nesta noite, de muitas formas, abraço a humildade, o amor e a alegria."

Se você se sentir motivado, acrescente seus próprios movimentos e gestos para dar forma à sua intenção.

Ação 3

Lembre-se: somos parentes da própria beleza e de toda a natureza. Converse com sua família, com os animais e com as plantas! E não se esqueça de ouvir também.

Assim como São Francisco, você pode falar com os pássaros e com os animais de quatro patas.

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Oito formas (cont.)

Assim como Santo Antônio, você pode falar com os peixes.
Assim como o Rei Charles III, do Reino Unido, você pode falar com as plantas e as árvores.

Ação e contemplação 4 Celebre a Festa da Criação, em 1º de setembro, e o Tempo da Criação, de 1º de setembro a 4 de outubro, de forma contemplativa, litúrgica e também por meio de ações práticas.
Aqui estão algumas ideias e recursos:
[seasonofcreation.org \(/pt\)](http://seasonofcreation.org/)

Faça algo descalço! Interaja com a natureza, passe um tempo ao ar livre e conecte seus pés à terra, à areia, ao mar.

Ação 5 Explore o ritmo de vida da Terceira Ordem da Sociedade de São Francisco, TSSF: trinta breves notas para ler de uma só vez, ou uma por dia durante um mês, em português:
https://tssf.org/flang/OS%20PRINCI_PIOS.fb.pdf

Contemplação 6 Pratique ir além da mente dualista, em direção a uma mente integrada, unitiva e contemplativa:
cac.org/daily-meditations/moving-beyond-our-binary-minds/
Para explorar mais a fundo:
cac.org/daily-meditations/

Ação 7 Caminhe com intenção. Talvez você possa até fazer uma peregrinação — ou uma mini-peregrinação!
Faça uma peregrinação virtual: visite on-line os sites de nossas províncias franciscanas e explore seus diversos recursos:
anglicanfranciscans.org/index.php/links
tssf.org
tssf.org.uk
spiritoffrancis.com

Ação e contemplação 8 Assim como Francisco disse: “Fiz o que me cabia fazer”, comemore o 800º aniversário abraçando sua vocação única nesta fase da vida.
Descubra “o que você precisa fazer agora”!

(traduzido com a versão gratuita do tradutor - DeepL.com)

Ocho formas de unir acción y contemplación **~ Conmemoración de los 800 años de San Francisco, 1226–2026~** *Andrew Twiddy (Compañero), Fotos de Andrew Twiddy, Modelo: Keelie Twiddy*

Estas son ocho oportunidades y recursos para unir la acción y la contemplación, la paz y la bondad, con el fin de celebrar el año del 800.º aniversario del Transitus de San Francisco — su paso de esta vida, el 3 de octubre de 1226.

Acción 1 ¡No te olvides de jugar! Haz algo sencillo y divertido todos los días. ¡Canta, baila, muévete!

Ocho formas (cont.)

- Contemplación 2** Tómame un momento de silencio y soledad, y usa esta sencilla afirmación franciscana diaria, un resumen de los principios de la Sociedad de San Francisco en la Comunión Anglicana:
Por la mañana: “Esta mañana, de muchas formas, abrazo la oración, el estudio y el trabajo.”
Por la noche: “Esta noche, de muchas formas, abrazo la humildad, el amor y la alegría.”
Si te sientes motivado a hacerlo, agrega tus propios movimientos y gestos para encarnar tu intención.
- Acción 3** Recuerda: somos parientes de la belleza misma y de toda la naturaleza. ¡Habla con tu familia, con los animales y con las plantas! Y asegúrate también de escuchar.
Como San Francisco, podrías hablar con los pájaros y con los animales de cuatro patas.
Como San Antonio, podrías hablar con los peces.
Como el rey Carlos III del Reino Unido, podrías hablar con las plantas y los árboles.
- Acción y contemplación 4** Celebra la Fiesta de la Creación, el 1 de septiembre, y el Tiempo de la Creación, del 1 de septiembre al 4 de octubre, de manera contemplativa, litúrgica y también con acciones prácticas.
Aquí tienes algunas ideas y recursos:
seasonofcreation.org/es
¡Haz algo descalzo! Interactúa con la naturaleza y pasa tiempo al aire libre.
¡Conecta tus pies con la tierra, la arena y el mar!
- Acción 5** Explora el ritmo de vida de la Tercera Orden de la Sociedad de San Francisco, TSSF: treinta notas breves para leer de una sola vez, o una por día durante un mes:
<https://tssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Los-Principios-Versio%CC%81n-Nueva.pdf>
- Contemplación 6** Practica ir más allá de una mente dualista para avanzar hacia una mente unitiva y contemplativa:
cac.org/daily-meditations/moving-beyond-our-binary-minds/
Y para explorar más a fondo:
cac.org/daily-meditations/
- Acción 7** Camina con intención. ¡Quizás incluso puedas hacer una peregrinación o una mini-peregrinación!
Realiza una peregrinación virtual: visita en línea los sitios web de nuestras provincias franciscanas y explora sus diversos recursos:
anglicanfranciscans.org/index.php/links
tssf.org
tssf.org.uk
spiritoffrancis.com
- Acción y contemplación 8** Tal como dijo Francisco: “He hecho lo que me correspondía hacer”, celebra el 800.º aniversario abrazando tu vocación única en esta etapa de tu vida.
¡Descubre “lo que necesitas hacer ahora”!

(traducido con la versión gratuita del traductor - DeepL.com)

Book Review and Interview with the Author

For the Love of God by Peter Prewandowski,

a Review by Teresa Rogers

Burning Bulb Publishing, pbk, \$14.99 (Amazon), 82 pages, published March 27, 2026

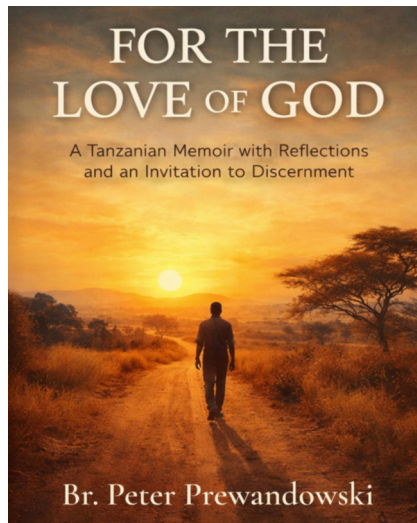
In this 80-page memoir, our TSSF brother Peter begins with his calling to the mission field when he was a recent college graduate. Most of the book then describes his work as a teacher at an Anglican school in Dodoma, Tanzania. His time at the school takes place in three sections: 1984-1986, 2003-2006, and 2009-2013. His students included Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and children from tribal religious communities.

With a degree in Elementary Education, it was nevertheless daunting that his very first teaching job was in Africa. Facing homesickness as well as new-teacher jitters, he writes that finding a way for him to be playful and goofy with his primary school students was a turning point.

“That day was the real beginning of my teaching career. Lord had given me a nudge; had given me permission to be the teacher He had created me to be. That act freed the children up to be all the Lord wanted them to be.”

From then on, he shares memories of how his skills, his background in theater, and his experience as a former youth leader, all allowed him to bring creativity and joy to his classrooms. He used innovative ways to study literature, science and history, often involving art and drama.

His students wrote poetry during a unit on the beatniks, and made sculptures out of plywood scraps when studying the American sculptor, Louise Nevelson. They dressed up as gods and goddesses in a study of Ancient Rome, decorating paper plates as masks. They acted out stories from the lives of the saints for the All Saints Day assembly. During the study of “Mountains of the World”, his seven-year-old students climbed a mountain, the highest hill near Dodoma. When studying the psalms, children wrote their own psalms of praise.



He also writes of attending the Anglican cathedral in Dodoma, as well as a small village congregation in the area. He took part in famine relief and helped deliver Christmas dinners to prisoners. He met with students at a theological college to improve their English.

Lavishly illustrated with photographs, Peter's memoir is colorful and lively. He ends as he began, with the issue of discernment. As a young man who wondered where God might be leading him, he was advised to take this questioning seriously and to seek out counsel and support. He ends this memoir with similar advice. “Occasionally I am asked how one might actually go about being a missionary. My advice to anyone in discernment, especially as to a calling to mission work.....Ask!”

An Interview of Peter Prewandowski by Harvey Hill

HH: Peter, it's a pleasure to talk to you about your book, which I really enjoyed. You say a bit about your original decision to write the book in 2018 or 2019. Can you say more about why you wrote it in general, and why now?

Peter: Over six years ago I read a memoir by a fellow tertiary, Donna Fuller, who served as nurse in Dodoma, Tanzania; the very city I served in. [ED. Peter also reviewed her book in the *Franciscan Times*, Advent 2021, pp 27-8] Her ministry began less than six months after I left in 1986. She knew some of the same Tanzanians I did, and served under the same Bishop. I loved reading her memoir and spoke to her about it. She was the first to encourage me to write my own, saying I owed it to myself and to the church to share my story. It's very rewarding, it's very exciting, to realize you have a story to tell.

HH: In your subtitle, you identify two tasks. Your book is a memoir of your experiences, and also an invitation to discernment. Your memoir is fascinating, particularly to one like myself who shares your love of Tanzania. Out of all the things you describe, is there one that really sticks out as important to you?

Peter: I believe we are all called to ministry, called to serve our Lord. I also think there are lots of little nudges that the Lord gives us that are easy to brush off, easy to ignore. I guess I'm saying, don't ignore them, explore them.

HH: You talk about your own process of discernment leading to your several trips to Tanzania. What is the invitation/ lesson for your readers' own efforts at discernment?

Peter: When we hear a call from the Lord, or even get a gentle nudge, our tendency is to look for reasons to say, 'no,' to brush the call off, to look the other way. It is easy to find a reason to say, "this isn't God's call to me." However, Jesus didn't say, "Go out into the world and keep this to yourself." He said, "Go tell everyone!" Discernment just means, try and figure what God is saying to you. But we have to bother, we have to take the chance to see if He is calling us to something outside ourselves.

HH: One of the fascinating things about your experience is your respectful relationships with people of other faiths. I think about your friendship with Nizar (Muslim friend in Dodoma) and your interactions with your quite religiously diverse students. You are also explicit about your commitment as a missionary to sharing the Gospel. What can you tell us about how those two worked together? Were they in tension with each other? Did they reinforce each other?

Peter: Meeting people of other faiths was my first wonderful surprise. Nizar and I discussed faith many times. I did the same with many of the parents who were of different faiths. My friendships and my faith were not in



Continued on page 8

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Interview with the Author (cont.)

conflict; they *did* reinforce each other. The families of different faiths, who sent their children to our school, were already secure in their own beliefs, as I was. We weren't a threat to one another. It is like that song we used to sing at camp, "We Are One in the Spirit, we are One in the Lord." In my memoir, I was careful not to talk about proselytizing; that was not the mission of our school. Yet, it was certainly our mission to share the Gospel of Jesus. I prayed, every day, in my classroom, with my students. Not always, but sometimes, circle time lasted over half an hour, which is a long time to talk to eight-year-olds about God. If you think about it, the Lord's Prayer can be prayed by almost any person of faith. There is nothing denomination specific, if that's a word (Muslims don't use the word *Father* in reference to God, but it could be replaced with *Allah*). I will also say I never forced any child to say that prayer. To my knowledge, everyone participated; the issue never came up.

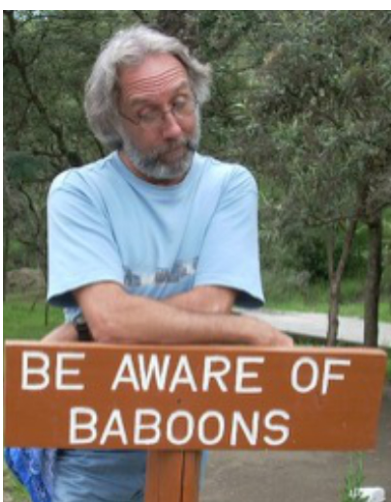
HH: At a time when the Christian Church in America appears to be in numerical decline, are there lessons we can learn from the Church in Tanzania?

Peter: The church is growing like crazy in Tanzania. Many pastors, especially in the villages, have three or four congregations that they minister to. In addition, talking about God and faith in day-to-day interactions is much more common than it is in the U.S. Faith, to the average Tanzanian, is an accepted and expected part of daily life. We seem to have lost that. That's one thing Africa gave me; I have become much more empowered to talk about my faith on a day-to-day basis.

HH: You describe the very ecumenical Christian community at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. You clearly found that gathering of different Christian denominations valuable. And you also missed weekly Eucharist at the Cathedral. Any lessons for Episcopalians interested in ecumenism?

Peter: I'm obviously biased, but Episcopalians are quite willing to share in worship with people of other Christian denominations. Agreeing to disagree is more than just a hip catch-phrase, its life giving. We mustn't lose that. I love the Holy Eucharist, and I will seek it out wherever I am. On the other hand, if I am worshipping with Christian brothers and sisters and that worship does not include Eucharist, I am fine with that. Would that I could receive Holy Eucharist every day, but if it is not available, that will not keep me from worship.

HH: You weren't yet a professed Tertiary during your time in Tanzania, and you were professed at the time of putting your book together. Looking back at your experiences, did they push you in a Franciscan direction? Are there ways in which they reflected a Franciscan charism even if without the name?



Peter: I always loved St. Francis, but in truth, I wasn't thinking about being a Franciscan while I was in Tanzania. On the other hand, there was a Franciscan spirit stirring in me, even if I didn't recognize it. The Dodoma diocese gave us a stipend of \$70 a month, but I had some sponsors back home as well. I often tithed 40% to 60%. I paid some children's school fees, helped with diocesan projects, helped pastors in villages, contributed to the prison feeding ministry, and purchased thousands of dollars' worth of school supplies for our own school. I guess I was really blessed in that way. I had become a novice over 40 years ago, but I left the novitiate before profession. It wasn't until I had been back home for several years that I began to feel a call to embrace a simpler way of life. Now, I am committed to my Franciscan walk and wouldn't have it any other way.

Welcome the Newly Professed



Cyndi Fastert

I am honored and humbled to be accepted into this Order and to walk with my fellow Tertiaries on this journey with St. Francis toward a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the years that I have studied, prayed, and served preparing for this day, I have created a Personal Rule of Life that has allowed me to dive deeper into my spiritual life while appreciating the wisdom of our dear Francis.

When thinking of how I might be able to serve the Order, I turned into myself to discern my spiritual gifts. I believe God has given me the gifts of teaching and writing, mercy, faith, giving, apostleship, and service. I believe I can support the Order as a formation counselor, or spiritual director. Of course, I would want to serve where I am most needed.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a professed member of the Third Order.



Randy Hemp

I believe that I've always had an attraction to St. Francis. First through the garden statue Francis and then later on in life realizing there's a whole lot more to Francis than that. I have some similar life experiences that Francis had especially by not going into the family business and living a much simpler life.

I'm in recovery (8years) from alcoholism. One thing we learn in AA is to keep our lives simple. Boy that's not easy but by being in recovery and embracing the Franciscan Charism it's made this a lot easier. I'll never forget my first 11th step meeting. At the end of the meeting someone read the prayer of St. Francis. When I heard it being read that made it clear to me that I have a calling to become a Franciscan. Yes, I know he didn't really write that prayer. I began talking with my priest and I decided that I'd become a Companion.

Not long after that I felt that I needed to go further and become a Tertiary. Well, here I am. I feel so blessed. My journey here has been a blessing. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I've done the right thing. I look forward to the future as a Franciscan.

Correction to "Welcome the Newly Professed", 2026 Spring issue. As you will see in this issue we welcome Randy Hemp, it should have put in Randy Mellon in the last issue.

Ally MacManus



I first learned of TSSF while scouring ALL the links on the St. Mark's (Seattle) website, in 2000. I tucked that knowledge away for 22 years. Then, after a major life event, I knew it was my time to revisit TSSF.

I am grateful that I had the time to devote to Formation, where I could really sit with the concepts and principles, letting them soak into my thirsty bones. I thoroughly enjoyed the discernment/formation learning. I feel the materials are written in such a way that revisiting them will bring new insights for years to come.

I look at things differently now; I'm slower to anger, and much calmer. I'm SO far ahead of where I even dreamed, I'd be!

Welcome the Newly Professed (cont.)



Brian Thomas

My calling to the Third Order has truly been a very blessed time in my life. It has been both challenging and rewarding in too many ways to count. My fellowship group and others in the formation process have helped me so much I can't begin to thank them all the way they deserve.

I have come to love helping the homeless and spending time in prayer, study and contemplation. The Lord has blessed me with a terminal illness freeing me from the secular work force to focus on His own as it is given me. I am truly thankful that He has never abandoned me and always brought me back into His flock when I strayed, even more so now as a Franciscan.

[Brian explained further: "I have metastasized stage four pancreatic cancer diagnosed last May. Average life span is 11 months so I feel very blessed to still be alive and to share in the blessing of our Savior's suffering. Additionally, I have more time for witnessing for His way and our Order.

I have always had a deep fear of the homeless similar to Saint Francis's own fears of the lepers. So, God has blessed me in providing an avenue to help them and learn from them and to love them through Bright Bridge Ministries which has a lunch service I volunteer for along with my church. Something I wouldn't have been able to do if I was still working.]

May God bless my brothers and sisters with His peace, joy and love!



Bill Lee

Greetings in Christ! I am very excited to be Fully Professed in the Franciscan Third Order. I have always felt a call to a deeper prayer life and have explored various ways to fulfill that. It was by sheer coincidence (or God's gracious leading) that Janet Strickler happened to come to my parish church and introduce us to the Third Order, which I didn't even know existed! It was a perfect fit for me.

I have learned so much in the two years of postulancy and novitiate. I am very thankful for all the leaders and mentors of that journey. I thoroughly enjoy the Lillies of the Field community group which has helped me along the way and keeps me connected to my brothers and sisters.

My path forward is hopefully what St. Francis wanted of all of us — To love the Lord God with all our hearts, minds and strength AND our neighbors as ourselves, and to seek that path through prayer and fellowship.

Rest in Peace

Rest in Peace: Carolyn Banks —63 Years Professed (Tied for Longest Professed in the Province)



From Her Daughter Karen Banks in the TSSF Facebook group

Carolyn Banks passed away May 25 in her home, on hospice. She was professed in 1960, and her religious name was Sr. Mary Benedict.

She was in hospice for a longer time than either of us could have foreseen, but kept her attitude up despite the gradual deterioration of her physical abilities. Mentally she remained pretty sharp right up until the last. I am grateful she was able to remain in her own home and had what I believe was a good death, with the Episcopal priest holding her hand and praying for her as she passed.

Obituary from Moore's Chapel Funeral Home on Jun. 5, 2026

Carolyn Beth Duty Banks, age 94, of Fayetteville passed away Monday, May 25, 2026. She was born May 11, 1932 in Rogers, Arkansas. She graduated from the University of Arkansas where she was a member of the Beta Kappa. She taught in the Fayetteville Public Schools and was a staff member of the University of Arkansas. She published one book and several articles and was included in the *Who's Who of American Women*. In 2007 she received an award from the Arkansas Historical Association for an article published in the *Flashback*.

She was a member of Clan MacDuff of Scotland, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the 20th Century Club, and the Northwest Arkansas Scottish Society. She was a member of the Friends of the Public Library and past Board member for the University of Arkansas Retirement Association. She served as an officer of the City Hospital Auxiliary Board for many years. She was devoted to dogs and raised a number of Skye Terriers and Dachshunds. She was preceded in death by her husband and her son.

My Fifty-Two Years with the Third Order (published in the *Franciscan Times*, Fall 2012)

Caroline Banks

I come from a “mixed religious family”; Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Methodist to be exact. I went to school in a convent school in Little Rock, Arkansas before graduating from public high school and going on to college at the University of Arkansas. In 1952, I married my college sweetheart when he was called back to active duty in the Air Force. He had just finished Law School as a USAF veteran. In 1958, after several years of traveling as an Air Force wife, and having two children, I went back to the University where my husband became a law professor, and I eventually finished two degrees and began teaching history in the local high school. We joined St. Paul's parish in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Not long thereafter, my husband decided to go to Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio for a semester in Bexley Seminary to test his vocation. We lived in student housing,

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Rest in Peace (cont)

and I decided to enroll also. While we were students at Bexley, we came to a decision. My husband decided he did not have a vocation, and I came to realize that I did!

With the help of a wise counselor and mentor on the faculty, I wrote to Father Joseph [founder of the American Province] at Little Portion on Long Island. The reasoning was that our pastor in Fayetteville, The Rev. Marius Lindloff, was a former friar at Little Portion, and was, in fact, an adopted son of Father Joseph. He discovered he did not have a vocation to the friar's life and became a parish priest in Arkansas. I felt that Little Portion was familiar to me from listening to Marius's stories since he and his wife were close neighbors, and we all became good friends for many years.

In 1960, I was contacted by Father Hugh [not the present Brother Robert Hugh] and entered postulancy. In those days Father Hugh served as the chaplain for all tertiaries. We had a long and influential correspondence, and he guided me through the postulancy with a firm but gentle hand. In those days no one knew what it was I was undertaking, nor did they much approve, so it could have been a very lonely trip without Father Hugh's support. I give credit to my husband for never wavering in his belief and support for my vocation.

After six months of postulancy, I entered the novitiate. In those days a novice wore a cord under clothing, as well as a scapular. At times the cord or scapular would flip out of a collar or sleeve, and I have always remembered the day when a gentleman patted my shoulder and whispered to me: "My dear, your price tag is showing!"

We kept a small notebook in which we recorded our progress or lack thereof, according to *The Manual*. The Manual was extremely detailed and gave directions for one's response to almost any event. Every day was a constant interior conversation with oneself as I added up my "faults". It was a very severe but very valuable period of training. The idea was that, in time, a person could be so conformed to the Rule that they became a "living Rule." At least, that was the goal to which I was taught to aspire, although it took me many years to understand that it was always a goal and never an achievement!

In 1963, I was accepted for Lifetime Vows. Again, things were a bit different back then. The Poor Clare Sisters made and sent me the full-scale scapular to be worn with a habit I had made myself. The habit was a full-length brownish tunic, while the scapular was gray wool. I also received a cord/girdle of white rope with the three knots of the profession I would make. The final gift was a beautiful silver crucifix with St. Francis on one side and St. Dominic on the reverse. The day of my Profession was in St. Paul's Fayetteville with family and friends attending. The rite was similar to ordination.

I wore the unadorned habit, but the scapular, cord, and crucifix were placed on the altar. As I knelt before Father Lindloff, he gave me a lighted candle, but then blew it out. And at that point I prostrated myself before the altar. He then placed the scapular over me and prayed that I would rise to a new life. At that point



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Rest in Peace (cont)

he gave me my new name in religion, which was/is Sister Mary Benedict. Then as I arose, he put the scapular on me; I put on the cord; and he placed the crucifix around my neck. It was very solemn and very moving. I am supposed to be buried in this habit, which also includes a white collar and brown veil.

There was no hard and fast rule on what I should do as a Sister, but Father Lindloff put me to work helping run the Sunday School and working with kitchen duties (the women's roles in the church in those days). I still had my own household to run and children to raise, so my time was constrained. I never suffered from idle hands!

In the mid 60s, Brother Robert Hugh paid a pastoral visit to our parish, and I acted as hostess. In preparation we had several open house lectures and meetings, so by the time Brother Robert Hugh arrived, there were a number of people who had shown an interest in TSSF. After he left, we had a Fellowship organized, which grew in time to be very large and spread out over the state. There were also Associates who were very active, and I served as Convener for almost 15 years. We held the national convention here in the early 70s.

In 1972, my husband had a chance to go to England to teach some courses at Oxford University. When we all arrived at our cottage in Banbury, there were flowers on the table and food in the fridge from nearby tertiaries. I so enjoyed our time in England, where I had the truly fulfilling chance to be part of a large and close Franciscan community. I had been isolated to some extent, and it was also a relief not to be the convener or elder for the first time! We spent a weekend in Hilfield with the brothers, and I formed a close friendship with a sister tertiary, Eileen Samuels, who lived in the next village.

When we came back to Arkansas, I discovered that things had changed. We had a new rector and a new bishop, neither entirely approved of the influence of our TSSF fellowship. They felt that it was too autonomous and insufficiently under the control of the established hierarchy. Luckily, Dr. Wray Wilkes was elected Convenor, and he was a great man who was able to work with the diocesan officials.

I became a novice counselor and served for several years. During that time, I was asked by the tertiaries in England to come back and do some courier work. Since my husband and I both yearned to return, the offer came at just the right time. The Franciscan Order provided us with accommodations throughout our months there. We stayed in convents, monasteries, guesthouses, and with friends from England, through Scotland, Wales, Ireland, then to Rome, and Assisi. Everywhere we went there were Franciscan sisters and brothers to greet us and make us feel like family regardless of denomination! I knew for the first time what the family of Franciscans really means.

In return, we carried documents, made purchases, and passed messages. We finally returned from Italy to English midlands with a huge replica of the San Damiano cross we had purchased for them in Assisi. Many eyebrows were raised as we trekked through airport lounges and across the tarmac with this enormous package on both our shoulders. It finally was hung high up in a convent chapel where its large size was perfect. At that point in time, while making a final visit to the isle of Iona, my husband became ill, and we returned home.

In 1979, we ventured forth once again, this time to North Africa and Spain, but once again my husband's health failed so we came back to Arkansas.

Rest in Peace (cont)

In 1980, our son died, and my husband's health continued to deteriorate. After several surgeries, they discovered that he had an undetected cancer. I gave up teaching and went to work at the University where I continued on the office staff until 1988. I was a full-time caretaker for my husband until 1987 when he lost his struggle.

After his death, it was not long until Dr. Wilkes also died. His wife, Mary Lillian, was elected Convener, but by that time, due to continued restrictions placed on our tertiaries and associates, many had moved away or left the Order. An example of the restrictions included a Priest-in-charge in the parish who refused to hear confessions from tertiaries because he did not believe in religious Orders! He soon left, but the parish was no longer inviting friars and sisters to visit, and we had long depended on their visits for spiritual oxygen! By the time Mary Lillian became Convener, we had only five members: three tertiaries, one postulant, and one associate.

In short order, the postulant left, one tertiary and the associate fell victim to Alzheimer's, and then Mary Lillian died suddenly. That left only me! Back at the beginning again.... there is a beautiful prayer shrine in the vestibule of our church dedicated to Dr. Wilkes and to the parish tertiaries. It is comforting on Sundays to see the candles flickering and revive memories.

In reflecting on these years, I have just touched on events which marked certain periods. As a Fellowship we did not single out one or two dedicated missions. Each member had his or her own calling. I, for example, while busy teaching, and caring for an invalid husband and a handicapped child, found myself continually called to rescue animals! That continues to this day... After I officially retired, I continued to serve on the Board of Directors for Retirement of Faculty and had a home business writing and editing papers for publication (in a University town there is a lot of call for that!) In 2007, I won the state Arkansas Historical Association award for editing and writing. Realizing I could not trump that, I retired for the second time.

I attempted to found a chapter of the Friends of Animals at our parish, and it had a thriving life for two years before foundering. Because my own health is in jeopardy, and I have very limited mobility, I have had to curtail most activities. I still have one terrier puppy which I took out of the show circuit. I had an older dog with Cushings Disease but lost her last week to my sorrow. She did have two good years, however. I have also had dogs with leukemia, and chronic heart trouble. I am told that the puppy, whose health is robust, will be my last endeavor!

It has been a busy half century and hard to believe how swiftly it flew by.

A Golden Jubilee of Profession Celebrated

The associate pastor at St. Paul's is excited that a "golden jubilee" is on the horizon. I find myself skeptical...doubting whether anyone will recognize what that is!

Finally, I have to mention what a gift it was to have Bett Wood as my chaplain these past three years (Bett died in 2024). She even made the trip all the way here to spend an afternoon with me! The first time I had been with a fellow tertiary in so many years! She is faithful to keep in touch by telephone, too. That means a great deal. There are others who are faithful about reaching out also: Annette Bell who was so supportive when I lost my old dog recently; and Father Kale King, who has kept in touch via Facebook (he died in 2011).