

THIRD ORDER NEWS

2025 / Issue 1: February



We adore you, Most Holy, Lord Jesus Christ,
here and in all your churches throughout the
world, and we bless you, because by your holy
Cross you have redeemed the world!

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*Ss Francis, Clare,
Elizabeth and Louis,
pray for us*

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER REPORT

Members of Provincial Chapter met together 13 to 15 February at Launde Abbey with a very full agenda, among which were Formation, Planning for *Francis 800*, Reviewing our Priorities on Outward-facing Projects and Pastoral Care in the Order.

Chapter bade a fond farewell to Tony Ross, who has been acting as Link Tertiary for Wales, West Midlands, Severn, and the Marches for longer than he had originally anticipated. In his place Chapter welcomed Millicent Dews. Also welcomed were Alan Williams as Provincial Communications Guardian (PCG) and Julia Barrett as Coordinator of Enquiries and Referrals.

Francis 800: over the next two years we will be celebrating the events leading up to Francis' death. Chapter looked at themes and activities, ideas for working with others and an action plan for turning ideas into reality. Chapter backed the direction of travel and spirit of the programme presented by the Provincial Formation Guardian (PFG) and agreed to devote a substantial sum to its fruition. In order to help us all to celebrate this milestone it is hoped that Clusters, Areas and Groups will engage with events as they take place and take part in some months of preparatory study starting at either Francistide or Advent this year. We must also remember that it will not just be the Anglicans and Lutherans celebrating, but also our Roman Catholic friends.

Reviewing our Outward-facing Priorities –

Chapter first identified the many projects already running and secondly shared ideas about what more might be done. There will be a further review in 12 months. The photo shows the fruits of our labour!

The PCG takes the view that **effective communication** is a two-way street, and that each of us as Tertiaries have to take responsibility for what we communicate and how we receive information.



Robert Dimmick, Provincial Treasurer, presented the **interim annual accounts**, and several grants were approved for on-going Franciscan work, or work by Franciscans.

We also discussed ethnicity, a further topic designed to encourage **inclusion** in our Order. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, our website will host a page of resources named Diversity Matters.

In matters of **Safeguarding** we are delighted that Rebecca Faal will continue to advise us for the next year. She helped members of Chapter in updating the Order's Safeguarding dashboard, which will be familiar to all Parish Safeguarding Officers. We worked through our Safeguarding Policies and procedures and agreed an Action Plan.

The **Link Tertiaries** each brought us up to date about their Areas, and a Working Party was set up to consider positive recommendations in cases where posts are difficult to fill.

Chapter received updates about current **Outward-facing Projects**: the Spiritual Direction Course; the joint conference between the Third Order and the Community of the Cross of Nails in 2026; on TSSF Eco-ministry; and on Making Christ Known and the latest draft of the Travelling Light booklet, which gives a simple outline of each day's Principle; and the Young Franciscans (YF) project – there is to be a booklet issued outlining the history of YF.

Chapter discussed **Pastoral Care** within the Order, and noted that Areas generally made good informal arrangements and that only one Area

had appointed a Pastoral Care Coordinator, as provided for in the Area Team Handbook. The Working Party would draft a more flexible provision for Areas to make the best arrangements they are able for loving pastoral care. Future guidance might well ask Area Teams to have a standing item about Pastoral Care on their agenda, in the same way as Safeguarding.

There was a discussion about the best way of encouraging one another to **treat each other well** within the Order, as a way of expressing the love that Tertiaries should hold for one another. This is largely the case, but sometimes, this is not evident! Chapter will develop and trial a Charter based on our Principles. After that, the Minister Provincial will discuss with Area Ministers the best way forward. All agreed, that our Principles are clear on these matters.

Much ground was covered in the 48 hours Chapter met together. Business was **surrounded by prayer**, and meditation; we were pleased to be joined by our Bishop Protector Martyn Snow for the final morning and he presided at our final joyful Eucharist.

Future residential Chapter dates are: 12-14 June and 16-18 October.



Some Chapter members at lunch on the Saturday

NEWS FROM AROUND THE AREAS

The Editor of Third Order News will welcome news from the Areas. Do please make contact through comms@tssf.org.uk

CAMBRIDGE AREA

On Saturday 10th May, the Cambridge Area Spring Area Day is happening in Girton College. To mark the 800th anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures, our six Local Groups are sharing in a presentation of the Stations of the Canticle of the Creatures (as originally devised by Br Colin Wilfred SSF). This will generate a lot of creativity, create a good experience of community and we are sure will produce some good pictures.

YORKSHIRE WEST, SOUTH AND CRAVEN AREA

Our Area meeting was held at Sheffield Cathedral in February where the Eucharist was celebrated by our newest Professed tertiary, Abi Thompson TSSF, the Dean of the Cathedral. It was followed by a talk and discussion led by Martyn Crompton TSSF, of our area, on our experiences of working alongside Asylum seekers and Refugees. (Photo right)



BERKSHIRE AREA

Renée Coulson TSSF, Area Secretary, writes:

I am taking on a couple of challenges by fundraising for charities that I support. Please see the extract from the Justgiving Page. I will not be starting my walk until Saturday 2 August. **An offer is made to match-fund, up to £500 for Franciscan Aid**, which is quite a tidy sum, I believe.

Would anyone be willing to offer overnight accommodation during the walk, as near to the trail as possible – a corner in a village hall or church would be helpful (but I would love it if a spare bed might be on offer, of course!) – for a small donation, which I will pay out of my own funds. I would just ask for a means of getting some hot water, and a loo and hopefully, a shop or pub fairly close at hand where I can purchase food.

All being well, my planned overnight stops are likely to be Wallingford, Abingdon, Oxford, Newbridge, Lechlade and Cricklade

Of course, if anyone would like to walk alongside me for their stage of the journey, they would be most welcome!

I'd like to hear as soon as possible from anyone who think they might be able to help so that I can get my plans in order. I hope to raise a minimum of £1,000 to pay towards completion of the building works at St Mary's Church, Hampstead Norreys - Phase 2 of Project Vision - which will provide much-needed facilities to make the building a more user-friendly space. These will include a servery and a loo!

Phase 1 found me walking over 150 km during March last year. This year, as I celebrate my 80th birthday, I will be walking the Thames Path from Pangbourne to the river's source in Gloucestershire in one go - a minimum of 86 miles.

Thanks for taking the time to visit my *JustGiving* page:

justgiving.com/crowdfunding/renee-coulson-project-vision2

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Your details are safe with JustGiving - they'll never sell them on or send unwanted emails. Once you donate, I will withdraw funds directly. It's the most efficient way to donate and saves time and costs.

RETREATS

Areas are invited to let the rest of the Province know of any retreat that they have organised. All retreats are open to all Areas unless noted otherwise.

RETREATS AT THE OLD PARSONAGE, FREELAND, OXFORD - 2025

Monday 17 March to Thursday 20 March Title. Poetry and Hymns:

Led by Sister Hilda Mary CSC

Cost £210.00

Poetry and Hymns: I have found that hymns have helped me when everything else has been falling apart, not least the hymns of Charles Wesley. Poetry has also been a source of inspiration, particularly those by George Herbert and Gerald Manly Hopkins.

Sister Hilda Mary belongs to the Community of the Sisters of the Church. Much of her ministry has been in running retreats, quiet days and accompanying people one to one in their journey of prayer. She has also been to Greenbelt with the Franciscans.

Friday 16 May to Sunday 18 May

Led by The Revd Viv Bridges

Title Upside down God or Inside out God

Cost £ 175.00

The Foolishness of God is Wiser than Human Wisdom: A reflection on how the message of Jesus Christ turns the values of the world inside out.

Viv was a Physics teacher before becoming an Anglican priest. She has been involved in Spiritual Direction for many years and has also organised and lead Quiet Days for St. Peter's Wolvercote, where she is part of the team. She is married and has grown up children and grandchildren.

Monday 7 July to Thursday 10 July

Led by Megan Daffern TSSF

Title: The Psalms and Christian Identity

Cost £210.00

Megan is a Tertiary living in Wells, where she is Chancellor of the Cathedral. She was originally in the Oxford Area when she was Chaplain of Jesus College. She is author of a book on the Psalms called Songs of the Spirit

Friday 17 October to Sunday 19 October

Led by Brother Malcolm SSF

Title: Living the Gospel Today

Cost £ 175.00

A time of reflection on some Franciscan themes: Humility, Love and Joy. These are the foundations of our Franciscan Vocation. In this retreat we will consider what they might mean for us today, as we seek to follow Jesus Christ in the way of St. Francis.

Brother Malcolm is a Franciscan friar currently living at Hilfield. He has led many, well-attended retreats here at Freeland and other venues.

Booking forms and further details for these retreats are available from Jean King TSSF on oxfordretreat@yahoo.co.uk 32 Ambleside Drive, Headington, Oxford OX3 0AQ.

Tel 01865 768943 Mobile 07944 280 226

EAST ANGLIA AREA

Friday 20 to Sunday 22 June 2025

Led by Brother Micael Christoffer SSF
First Order European Minister Provincial

**Silent Retreat: Reflections on John the Baptist
and Saint Francis**

Cost: on application

The House of Retreat, The Street, Pleshey, Essex, CM3 1HA

If you are interested to join us please e-mail our Retreats' Secretary philipyoung@btinternet.com or phone on 07527 574982 for more details and a booking form.

CAMBRIDGE AREA

Friday 19 to Sunday 21 September 2025

Led by Sister Maureen CSF

Silent Retreat

Cost £276, which includes conductor's expenses
and a donation to CSF.

Chelmsford Diocesan House of Retreat, The Street, Pleshey, Essex, CM3 1HA.

One ensuite room remaining. www.retreathousepleshey.com

Contact: Katharine Ames-Lewis TSSF k.ameslewis@btinternet.com

LONDON EAST AND SOUTH EAST ESSEX AND EUROPE

Friday 17 to Sunday 19 October 2025

Led by Sister Sue CSF

Silent Retreat: Reflections on S Clare

Cost: en-suite: £214; not en-suite: £196

The House of Retreat, The Street, Pleshey, Essex, CM3 1HA.

It is open to Tertiaries from other areas and there are still places available.

If you would like to join us, please email Helen Mossop at hmossop47@gmail.com

A retreat, limited to Tertiaries in the **Wyevern Area**, will take place Monday 15 to Friday 19 September at Freeland.

PROFESSIONS

Avon Vale Area

Polly McKay n/TSSF will be professed on 15 March 2025.

Mersey Valley Area

Olu Olojugba TSSF was professed early in 2024.

Chris Lennie TSSF, Simon Beaumont TSSF, Andy Jones TSSF, and Angela Dickson TSSF were professed at Francistide.

Wyevern Area

Since the last issue of TON, Melia Cope TSSF, Jen Jones TSSF and Tobias Thornes TSSF have been professed.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Wyevern Area

Rosemary Powe TSSF and Janice Taylor TSSF

JUBILARIANS

We very much want to celebrate those who are celebrating significant **anniversaries** of their Profession as Tertiaries: eg, 10, 25, 40 and 50 years. More than that, even!

Mersey Valley Area

John Wood TSSF will have been professed 30 years this year.

Wyevern Area

Michael Cluett has celebrated 40 years of profession since the last issue of TON.

THOUGHTS AND PLANS

One long term aim is to develop a **Podcast** of relevance to the Third Order and beyond. So, we are looking for people who might have production and presenting skills (you know who you are). Please make contact with the Provincial Comms Guardian to have a chat about this. Contact details as below.

FROM SOLENT AREA

Holding the challenge of communications in our Order today: For many, the advent of IT and internet access has been great. Emails, zoom and accessing information on line has meant that we can keep in touch, video call, and respond to issues and concerns promptly and keep more people 'in touch'. However, this is a step into the unknown still, with some continuing to recoil at the very thought.

As an Area Secretary and Communications Officer (we merged the two roles in our Area – it made sense), I find that the majority of folk are fine with the more immediate and more carbon neutral options, but the challenge remains of some who cannot engage this way. Our Zoom licence is now an annual charge within our Area finances, and I cannot see a time when it will not be well used. Coupled with the increasing number of our Order who are increasingly infirm and less mobile, there is a challenge of inclusion and ensuring that people are retained in the communications loop and their sense of belonging and value is not diminished.

Our challenge is to tread this path, and accompany those of reduced mobility, who are

often the same who find it increasingly difficult to contemplate a more digital presence; and so the conflation of the two challenges increases their sense of isolation. What is the answer?

Perhaps we need to see the Small Group as a tool of extending that pastoral inclusion. The Small Group is the place for those to be mindful of sharing and including for their less mobile, and less tech aware members of what is going on, and to think how we can take the Order to them - in their space. We have seen the benefit of doing this, in a small way, and meeting when we can at the home of those for whom travel is becoming impossible, and the grasping of a Zoom call remains remote. We are thinking of ways of doing more, but the tension of time availability and ability weighs with us all.

Our presence and involvement perhaps is the antidote to this, in an imperfect and sporadic way. I do not think we can completely 'solve' this challenge, and I wonder if mobility will impact more as time passes. We can offer to include, to share time and opportunity, and importantly, to be aware that these barriers to inclusion exist, and to see how we as individuals and Small

Groups can commit to ensuring that the most remote of us can remain in our hearts and shared times together.

In simple terms, I wonder if we are hearing a call for a more pastoral thread within our Order at this time.

Mark Woodgate TSSF
Solent Area Secretary and Comms Guardian
19th February 2025

AN UPDATE FROM FRANCISCAN AID

Franciscan Aid is the 'Family Charity' of TSSF, working with those most in need across the world.

Applications are discussed at our trustees' meetings which are held three times a year. Each application must have a Project Link who is a member of the First, Second or Third Orders of SSF, they are then responsible for monitoring how the grant money is spent and providing reports.

Because we have limited funds we do not normally fund building projects, wages or school fees, but each application is carefully discussed.

At each meeting we have around £25,000 to £30,000 to share between applications, and examples of recent grants are:

- a project in Zimbabwe for school uniforms, public toilets, water tanks and solar pumps.
- a parish in Madagascar hit by a devastating cyclone, for food and materials to repair people's homes
- equipment for a school in Sri Lanka
- to WASH, an organisation providing sanitary equipment to teenage girls in Ethiopia, and ongoing training in menstrual hygiene. Many teenage girls stay away from school during their periods

because they do not have access to pads, and are too embarrassed to go to school.

If anyone knows of a project which might would be eligible for assistance from Franciscan Aid, please contact the secretary at secretaryfaf@gmail.com

Although most of our projects are overseas we are keen to support projects in the UK, particularly those working with refugees and asylum seekers.

Website

Do look at our new website **Franciscanaid.org** to discover all the support that Franciscan Aid has been able to give over the years, thanks to the amazing generosity of Tertiaries. Your donations have given and are giving support to those in dire need or marginalised all over the World.

Be a Trustee

As Trustees we meet three times a year to carefully consider applications and allocated funds you have raised. The meetings are via zoom, but in the summer we meet in Southwark. The Southwark meeting is hybrid. This allows Professed Tertiary to be a Trustee and for us to be visited by Tertiaries from all over the World. If you would like to discover more, please do contact us.

THIRD ORDER STUDY NETWORK

With another year comes another Study Network programme.

The webinar format has proved successful in reaching out and providing interesting Franciscan material to the wider Order. We hold this as our

offering to encourage and enable tertiaries in their life-long formation.

We have recently been joined on the planning team by Br Michael Jacob SSF and rejoice in his addition. However, we are still looking to recruit

more Third Order members to bring fresh eyes and vision to the table. If you have an interest in Franciscan study or ongoing formation do get in touch.

Contact susanjshirdel@icloud.com for a role description or for a conversation re: the Study Network.

The TSSF Study Network plan is to present three webinars throughout this year, one each term. They will take place during the evening and a zoom link be sent out during the week before.

- **Thursday 15 May at 7pm**
Tertiary Mystic, Angela of Foligno
Presented by Br Nicholas Alan SSF

- **Tuesday 15 July at 7pm**
Bonaventure and the Cross
Presented by Thomas Sharp TSSF
- **Wednesday 15 October at 7pm**
Topic to be confirmed
Presented by David Walker TSSF

We hope you will be able to join us and that you might consider becoming part of the planning forum to enable the continuation of this valued part of our Franciscan life together. As we mainly meet on zoom you do not have to be living in UK to be a member of the team.

Peace and Joy

Susan Height TSSF
Coordinator TSSF Study Network Enablers

THE FOLLOWING MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO TERTIARIES

The Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University

Franciscan Studies Online Summer School – Monday 9 to Friday 20 June 2025

The Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) in the Department of Theology & Religion at Durham University is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the second summer school in Franciscan Studies on the above dates.

This two-week online summer school in Franciscan Studies is an exciting opportunity to encounter the riches of Franciscan theology, history and spirituality and explore their relevance for today. Learn from world experts in Franciscan studies through video lectures and live Teams sessions, and interact with participants from across the globe in small group seminars. The flexible online format means that you can register from anywhere and fit the courses around your schedule, with the option to take one or more courses as you choose. Two public lectures by leading scholars are open to all, whether or not you are registered on a course.

For more information, visit www.ccsfranciscanstudies.co.uk

Register for the summer school at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/franciscan-studies-online-summer-school-2025-main-courses-tickets-1242109766749>

For any enquiries, please contact ccsfranciscan.admin@durham.ac.uk.

WHO TO CONTACT

Membership Secretary for changes of address or email address (which is particularly important if you want to continue to receive electronic communications):

Mary Plank TSSF memsec@tssf.org.uk

Webmaster for any issues relating to the website:

John Lovatt TSSF webmaster@tssf.org.uk

Communication Guardian for issues related to communications of any kind, including TON:

Alan Williams TSSF comms@tssf.org.uk

Provincial Treasurer for donations and gift aid:

Robert Dimmick TSSF treasurer@tssf.org.uk

Knox Dick Fund for Retreat Fund applications:

Hilary Healey TSSF knoxdick@tssf.org.uk

Safeguarding Advisor for any matters of safeguarding concern, but please contact your Area's Safeguarding Advocate in the first instance:

Rebecca Faal safe@tssf.org.uk

Franciscan Aid for information and to donate, and to receive information about how to gift aid if you are a UK taxpayer:

The Secretary secretaryfaf@gmail.com

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