



## Minister Provincial Nominee Address – Lesley Anne Di Marco

Did you, like me, see the fireworks in November? As they burst above my head and filled the night sky with an explosion of sparkling lights of glorious colours and as I listened to the Ooohs and Aaahs of delight I wondered what it would be like if all of us in TSSF could light up the world with such wonder and excitement seen in the faces of the children. What if the “inflaming of our hearts” were to spread a fire of love so amazing that those around us were welcomed into God’s passionate love for all?

The Third Order is a gift from God and to have been called to belong is a blessing. Making our vow of profession is life defining and life changing, it certainly was for me some 30 years ago and the structure and obedience to the rule gave a dimension to my life that has held and kept me in God’s embrace. I pray that it is the same for you. We are bound to God and to each other in order to make our Lord Jesus Christ known and loved everywhere. The vision St. Francis made clear was to serve the Lord by serving the poor; it is up to us now to keep that vision alive and live in belief, humility and hope.

Francis showed us a particular way to follow Jesus and we have been chosen to continue in his way of service.

My engagement with the Third Order over the years in varying roles is a huge privilege, horizons have been widened and I have been inspired as TSSF has shared stories across the provinces, most recently during my journey to Sri Lanka, where I represented the Order and was motivated to enable us to share even more.

I have worked for charities all my professional life as a national and international youth and community worker, working with the marginalized and disaffected. I also have experience as a trustee ranging from clerk to the board, CEO for a large YMCA to Chairman of the Board of Trustees for an international organisation providing mission and ministry opportunities for young adults across the world. I believe we should seek ways to engage with younger people to open up ways in which they too can engage with the Order. When it was suggested to me that I should consider and reflect on offering myself for the role of Minister Provincial and having in mind the Principle for Day 24, I undertook a serious and prayerful discernment process with others from all walks of life, who know me and I am truly thankful to have the support of the Sussex Area Team.

It seems to me that there is a divide between Chapter and all of us; our views need to be taken into consideration. The hard work and outcomes of the forthcoming Convocation must be acted on for it is our voice and if you choose me I will ensure that together with you these decisions are implemented. The role of Chapter is to keep the aims before us all as our guardian, to ensure we reflect on our way of life and not be overtaken by busyness. Of course we must be business like, however I truly believe that in all we do our prayer and reflection should guide our undertakings and be at the forefront. I will do my very best to make certain that our vision, aim and purpose are shared between us for the furthering of God’s kingdom here and now for Chapter is the servant of the Order.

We are the Order and we are the acts of the apostles today. I pray that we can all learn different ways of living in common unity, with reflection and contact between us keeping the spirits of Francis and Clare alive as we strive to follow in Christ’s footsteps.