

Minister Provincial Election Address - Tim Higgins



For the past three years I have worked from North Wales as Link Tertiary between Provincial Chapter and a Cluster of seven Areas. I am also Chapter member of the Steering Group for Justice, Peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC).

Profession in TSSF came soon after ordination and, because of moves, I have been a part of five TSSF Areas.

Since finishing as City Canon in Bristol there has been more space to arrange Franciscan inspired events. For example, in October the 'Sacred Land' residential weekend was about our relationship with the natural world. Most who came were 'spiritually curious'. A third of the twenty-five participants were Tertiaries and there was great interest in the way of Francis and Gospel life in our world today.

As Link Tertiary I often hear –

- A longing to reach out together 'in company' and with the clarity of Francis
- "Chapter feels a long way away"

This election is happening now so that our Minister Provincial elect will be present at the Convocation in May 2017. This will set our priorities of purpose and vision for the future. I believe that after the Convocation what matters will be the way we choose to work together across the Order. The new working group, 'The Conduct of Chapter' just appointed with the Bishop of Manchester, is set up to grow new ways of serving the Order as we follow up Convocation [See Chapter Minutes, October].

Experience and practice that can serve in the role of Minister Provincial

- *From vision building to action and oversight:*

Working as City Canon required listening to people and creating teams to move from vision to action. Examples: the Cathedral Fairtrade Fashion Show connecting to young people in the city; and a project named 'The Reconciliation Laboratory' testing out faith in issues, such as poverty and conflict and the wealthy of a city. Similarly, chairing e.g. school Governors required agreeing vision priorities, while at the same time practicing secure administration.

Taking up the Role of Minister Provincial:

- *Some of the guiding Franciscan foundations that renew my energy and confidence.*

Direction-finding - Discernment comes before decision-making : Francis in company, and in retreat.

Belonging - our part with God's life in all creation: Francis and the Canticle of the Creatures.

Local & Global – being sisters and brothers, and acting internationally: Francis and the Sultan.

Inclusion – aiming to live the openness of Jesus to others, as in the Principles. Francis and the Leper.

Sharing gifts - Joy in gazing without possessing or clinging: in the spirit Francis and Clare, (John 20 v.17)

Some personal background:

I have found art and creativity in almost rebuilding the house in which we now live – lime mortar, stone walling, and plumbing keeps me close to the earth (as does its electrics!). With Pauline, my wife, and our family of six come the experiences of joy and challenges shared in a community of encouragement and love.

I hope to have conveyed 'where I am coming from' and why I am ready to say 'yes' to those proposing my nomination as Minister Provincial.

I have never been more convinced that the Franciscan practice of the Gospel is urgent life giving wisdom, for public as well as for personal life. In our Vow of Profession we "give ourselves *in company* with our sisters and brothers and so I give myself now in this process of discernment.

If you would like to talk about any of these matters please call me on
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