

The Third Order, Society of Saint Francis

A religious order in the Anglican Communion

High Leigh Conference Centre,
Hoddesdon,
Hertfordshire, UK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

John Hebenton named minister general of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis.

John Hebenton has been named as minister general of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis, an international Anglican/Episcopal order that accepts men and women, clergy or lay, who are called to a lifelong discipline and vow within the Franciscan tradition. He succeeds Ken E. Norian who was elected 6 years ago.

John was elected at a recent meeting of the Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter held in High Leigh, England. IPTOC is a gathering of ministers provincial and representatives of the 5 provinces of the Pacific (Aotearoa-New Zealand and Polynesia with Melanesia); Americas; Europe; Africa; and Asia Pacific (Australia, Papua New Guinea and East Asia) held every 6 years.

As minister general, John will serve as "the functional head of the Third Order throughout the world, and its servant." His responsibilities include co-ordinating the interprovincial life of the Third Order; acting as convenor for meetings of the ministers; and calling the next Inter-Provincial Chapter in 2023. His priority over the next few months is to begin work on the decisions of the just completed IPTOC.

"This is a huge honour and a humbling responsibility to be minister general at this time. At our recent IPTOC the Spirit of God was clearly moving in a number of our provinces, calling us to renew our identity as Franciscans. 800 years ago Francis of Assisi heard the crucified and risen Christ call him to rebuild the church. He did not see this as building the institution, but simply living the gospel, and living the gospel simply. On his death bed he told his closest brothers that he had done what was his to do, and invited them to listen as Christ showed them what was theirs. Francis says the same to us today. We are being invited to hear again how we might rebuild the church in the way of Francis and Clare. Two significant themes that came out of IPTOC were the need to be more intentional in our ongoing formation as we grow in our lives following Christ in the way of Francis and Clare; and the desire to use the ever increasing technology to do this together rather than separately in our 5 provinces."

John is married with three adult children and resides in Mount Maunganui, Aotearoa-New Zealand. He has been ordained for 30 years, with most of his ministry being in youth ministry. Currently he is vicar of the Anglican Parish of Gate Pa, Tauranga, which is situated on the site of one of the last battle sites in the New Zealand Land Wars. He has been a Third Order Franciscan since 1993 and was life professed in 1995. He has served the Franciscan community as a novice counsellor, area chapter representative and area chaplain. From 2006 – 20015 he was minister provincial for the Province of the Pacific.

The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis is the revival within the Anglican Communion in our times of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance originally founded by Saint Francis. In 1205, Francis of Assisi was called by God to rebuild the church. Early in his ministry, Francis recognized the need to include people from all walks of life within his movement of reform and renewal. The work of following Christ in humility, love and joy, which is the vocation of all Christians, could not be restricted to the traditional life of the Friars and Sisters. This was true in the 13th century and it remains so today.

Today, there are estimated to be over a half-million Franciscans worldwide in the Christian family, including First Order brothers and sisters who live a celibate life in their respective communities, and the Third Order, which consists of men and women, single or in committed relationships who, though following ordinary professions, are called to a dedicated life of service to our Lord through prayer, study, and work.

For information see <http://www.anglicanfranciscans.org/>

or contact: MinGentssf@gmail.com

Phone: (NZ) 021 679202





John Heberton tssf and his predecessor Ken E Norian tssf.