

Third Order Newsletter

Trinity Season, 2008

St Antony of Padua

Studies should not destroy the spirit of holy prayer and devotedness." (St Francis to St Antony)

From the Minister Provincial

Dear brothers and sisters

I find it deeply moving each year when 20 or more W. A. tertiaries stand around an altar, as one after the other we repeat the words, "I, Kath..., "I, David..., "I, Nancy... etc. renew my pledge to serve our Lord Jesus Christ in the Third Order... for the rest of my life." The Renewal of the Professed is a profound witness to Christian commitment.

This year, 2008, will be the 25th year in which Rae and I have repeated our promises as tertiaries. We have nearly always renewed with our W.A. brothers and sisters. Their presence in our lives has been a joy.

After 25 years, I keep asking the important question, What is the Third Order for?

My best effort is that the Third Order has a twofold purpose: firstly as an individual, the Order encourages me on my Franciscan journey.

Secondly, the Order is a community where everyone is completely equal. St Francis lived in a world of division and inequality. The world laughed at his vision: he believed that *love* could overcome the divisions between lords and peasants, rich and poor. Francis wanted his community to be a demonstration that all are one in Christ's love. That is still our calling: to witness *by our love for each other* that love overcomes divisions.

We discussed this at Chapter this year and also asked questioned the purpose of our annual meeting as Chapter. We meet at considerable expense to the Order. So we

committed, among other decisions, to holding some meetings as tele-conferences.

But we do need to meet face-to-face so that Chapter can *live the life*. For a few days, Chapter learns better how to live in love with each other. We do this, just for the sake of doing it, and also as a witness to the whole Order. How we live together at Chapter influences how we live at home, just as our Areas influence Chapter's life together.

Secondly, at Chapter we equip ourselves as the Order's leaders. In the Franciscan family, leaders are called Minister –servant - rather

than Abbot or Superior. This year, the Abbot of the Benedictine community at New Norcia, Dom Placid, led us in a *lectio divina* on the gifts and dangers of leadership. Helen Granowski, Regional Minister Vic/Tas, also reflected on the "Art and Soul of the Regional Minister". Helen encouraged Ministers to attend to the bigger picture of community building, while managing the details.

It was a delight to have with us our Minister-General, Dorothy Brooker.

Dorothy serves the Order by visiting and encouraging Provinces. She recounted her trip to tertiaries Brazil, and their healing and growth.

Please pray for Provincial Chapter: for its decision making; for its managing of our finances, for its planning and projects. Thank God for Provincial Chapter as a sign of the wider Order and the tradition it carries and the opportunities for life it brings.



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Peace and joy, *Ted Witham*

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Motoring To Chapter

by Tony Hall-Matthews, Provincial Chaplain

I suppose the one way to find out just how far the East Coast is from Perth, is as they say in Perth, to drive from *t'otherside* to the West Coast. Mind you, if you were kicked along by a "West Coast Eagle" it might feel a little shorter!

Anyway, I travelled to Chapter in my little Forester called "*Bertie*" (from the way in which the first Bishop of Carpentaria, Gilbert White was referred to by his sisters. And remembering that the little Cessna aeroplanes that I flew for the Diocese of Carpentaria for thirty years were proudly named "*Gilbert White*") was indeed the second time I had crossed the Nullarbor. The first time was when Ansett Airlines went broke on a Wednesday morning, and I was due to fly to Adelaide to give a paper at a church History Seminar the following weekend!

With the newly-amalgamated Diocese of Carpentaria NQ sold the aircraft "*Gilbert White*". Thus reduced the Church's ministry to the bush areas in the Far North and North West of Queensland, all I was left to "*fly*" was my poor man's four wheel drive "*Bertie*". When he gets to 54 knots (100 kph) he thinks he is flying!

This second trip across the continent was to take our PNG Regional Minister from Popondetta, Harold Joinoba, to "discover" parts of Australia and to do some deputation work for the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) on the way. Well, that was not the only reason I drove; my thesis was published in Perth and the publisher was retiring and going out of business and I had 140 books to pick up.

Knowing that it would take four long days of driving from Yungaburra to Perth, we left on Tuesday before Chapter, and we reached Winton in the evening. Harold was not feeling terribly well, so we booked into a motel, rather than sleeping in the car. We left early the next morning and by the time we reached Charleville at mid-morning Harold was suffering a malarial attack. So we went to the local hospital to get some medicine that Harold knew would arrest the attack. Unfortunately neither the hospital, nor the local pharmacy had this medicine.

Communication was a challenge for a Papuan Patient with an Indian Doctor, who thought Harold was staying in Charleville for month. We went on our way with the advice of the pharmacist that we could get the medicine elsewhere.

However, an hour out of Charleville, the doctor called on the mobile phone advising us to return so that

he could admit Harold as he had a dangerous form of malaria. So back we came. They gave him quinine and he rapidly recovered. The bill

for two nights in the hospital was \$2,025.00. As an alien he was not covered by Medicare. I wrote a report on what happened and after two months of bureaucratic dawdling, the fee was waived!

This put us behind schedule and we had to cancel the deputation in Perth. As it turned out ABM had not been very efficient in



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planning this deputation tour to thank people for the support for the Oro Province disaster last year and to speak about his work with Children's Ministry. You may have seen Harold's photo in ABM's Lenten Appeal. So it was not possible for him to speak at Bunbury or in Adelaide. However when we came back to far north Queensland, he spoke extremely well at Atherton about the Franciscan dynamic in the work he is doing in PNG.

After Chapter, Harold met tertiary gatherings at Busselton and in Perth before setting out with Helen Granowski on a tour through Margaret River, Pemberton and Denmark and



Albany for two days. It was an exciting bit of detective work to find out where Betty Hay was now living near Denmark having moved from Mt Macedon. She and Bob had only just arrived. After contacting the Priest in Charge at the Parish and cruising around the immediate hinterland of Denmark, we found them in their temporary accommodation: a big shed on a hill with magnificent views of the Southern Ocean. Bob and Betty Hay had served for many years in PNG. With Harold they both started brushing up on the local Oro language! It was a time of great celebration, and the only hitch was that we could not stay any longer.

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We dropped Helen at Albany where she went by bus to catch her plane back from Perth to Melbourne.

Harold and I continued on our way. We slept in the car on the Nullarbor Plain. One night we found a track in the dark away from the noisy highway, and we settled down for the night. Suddenly we were alarmed by a bright light and an ear-splitting noise that clattered and banged around us! We had parked only about 15 metres from the transcontinental railway line!

And that was not the last fright we had. Now on our fourth day back from the West Coast, with only an hour to go to complete our 13,000 kilometre journey, we were confronted by lights on full beam ahead of us. We slowed down and I was about to flash my lights at the car coming towards us when I realised that it was stationary. As we drew close to the vehicle, we could hardly see anything ahead of us, and slowing down to about 20 kph, suddenly in front of us were three cattle. One hit our bull bar, was thrown up on the bonnet and kicked in our windshield! We obviously were not going very fast as our airbags did not fly out with inflation! But once we stopped, the other car sped off into the night. They would have seen our accident, but the driver could have been over .05 or may have some other reason not to come to our aid. We overcame our initial shock, and found out that the car was drivable and the wheel alignment was ok, but the left-hand headlight was looking for possums in the top of the trees as we drove on!!

All in all it was a wonderful trip, and the long conversations Harold and I had helped to cement our understanding of the membership and ministry of the Third Order in a cross cultural situation.

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I'll be back up in PNG from 1 October till about the 5 November. I'll be in the Popondetta Region first, then we will have several days in Port Moresby setting up a new Region, before I go to Alotau and venture off in a dinghy to visit Regional Minister Anselm Rupusina and the Dogura Region.

Finally I have mentioned my published thesis that is an examination of the fiduciary

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relationship (or duty of care) between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Missionary Diocese of Carpentaria. It is a good read, and I can get it to you for a discount price of \$30 plus freight. It does indeed tell the story of a ministry of poverty that should bring joy to any Franciscan's heart!!

Tony Hall-Matthews

General Chapter and Conference 2009 – Next Year!



Philip Thirlwell and our fellow-tertiaries in Sydney are working on the plans for our General Chapter and Conference. It will be held from July 16-19 next year in New College at the University of New South Wales. It will be an exciting Conference celebrating our 50 years as a Province. During the conference, we will launch the Province's history which Denis Woodbridge is in the process of preparing. Now is the time to start saving and plan to attend.

Visit of Sr Ilia Delio OSF – Next May!

Also look out for the dates of the visit of Sister Ilia Delia in May 2009. The Franciscan Federation of Australia has invited Sister Ilia as part of the worldwide celebrations of the 800th year since St Francis met Pope Innocent III to gain permission to "live the Gospel".

A Franciscan scholar, Sister Ilia enjoys a reputation as a wonderful presenter. She will give talks on "Christian life in an evolutionary universe" and "living in a sacramental world" in Sydney and Perth, and maybe in other capital cities.

Ministers Provincial to Meet in WA

Next year the Ministers Provincial from around the world will meet with the Minister General in W.A. It will be a great privilege to host this meeting in our Province. Please pray for me and my colleagues in the run-up to this meeting.

Assisi for \$US399?

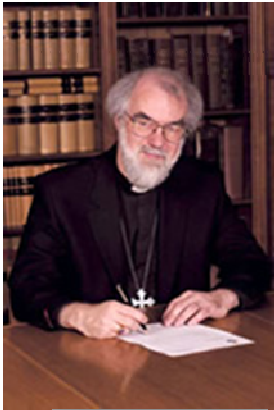
If you attended Perth General Chapter in 2006, you will remember our Franciscan story-teller, Bob Wilhelm. Bob is offering a 'virtual pilgrimage' to Assisi this Francistide. Details online <http://www.storyfest.com/2008->



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[Assisi.html](#) (and -sorry to those not connected - you do have to have the internet to virtually travel!)

Franciscans Pray for Lambeth

Please continue your prayers for Archbishop Rowan Williams and all the bishops of the Anglican Communion as they make their way to Lambeth this July. At the time of tensions within our Communion, we should pray both for faithfulness to Christ's teaching and also for the ongoing gift of unity. As you know there will be a Franciscan hospitality tent at Lambeth, where tertiaries will provide a praying presence throughout the conference, and Franciscan bishops will celebrate a noon-time Eucharist each day. So please pray with and for our brothers and sisters as they

exercise this ministry for the whole of the Communion.

Margaret McNeil Honoured

At Canberra/Goulburn Synod 2007, Mrs Margaret McNeill TSSF of Holbrook (NSW B) was one of three Honorary Lay Canons of St Saviour's Cathedral. Margaret's investiture was in grateful recognition for her work in the Parish of Holbrook and ministry to the people of the Holbrook and district, especially in the area of aged care.

As a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, Margaret has served as a Pastoral Care Coordinator. From 1985 to 1990 she worked actively for the establishment of a hostel for the elderly in the community of Holbrook. From 1990 to 2007 she has exercised an energetic ministry of Lay Chaplain, Carer and Counsellor to the frail aged clients of the Harry Jarvis Wing and patients at the Holbrook Hospital.

from "The Anglican Times" –Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn

Looking Into the Face of the Other

by Colin Fidock

The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Giacomo Bini ofm wrote in October 2002, 'Franciscans need to learn to read the signs of the times to form a Franciscan vision of the world that develops a balanced and critical judgement of events and knows how to discover in the world the good that God is doing there. Responses...have often been small but creative in helping to unravel oppression and violence within our

fraternities, our cultural systems and ourselves.

As part of the Franciscan family we are called to work in a special way with **Franciscans International in order to make our voice heard** in the decision making of international institutes...

Each Franciscan must ask themselves, "How can I become peaceful, just and live in harmony with creation, as well as work to

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dismantle the structures of sin and oppression that marginalise most of humanity?"

Franciscans International began in 1982 as a vision to provide the Franciscan family a platform at the United Nations. This Non Government Organisation, [NGO] took shape to represent Franciscan concerns for the poor, for justice and peace, and for the care of God's creation.

Franciscans International now has offices in New York, Geneva and as from March 2nd 2008 Bangkok. It is able to work effectively with UN agencies and other international organisations as an advocate, focussing on the needs of people in their daily struggle for basic needs, respect and rights



Sunday 2nd of March. was a significant milestone for FI as the **Asia Pacific region is home to two thirds of the world's population.**

Within this vast region there is considerable diversity of religions, cultures, values, castes, politics, languages, and considerable contrasts between the rich and poor.

The opening and blessing of the office by His Excellency Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio [Apostolic Nuncio] was attended by 70 guests including Franciscans from Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Laos, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Singapore, West Papua, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

This was a most joyous occasion, all the more remarkable because of the gathering of our brothers and sisters from far flung places,

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joining in unity for a common cause to strive for peace and justice for all.

The Eucharistic celebration was a most spiritual event for all who shared in it. The entrance of the peace flag carried by Fr. Abin Amalan OFM [India] brought with it peace and a great sense of unity as we rejoiced in song and prayer as one body in Christ. The songs; **City of God, One Bread, One Body and Come build my church** further strengthened our faith and hopes for the training program awaiting us all.

During the Eucharist, the Training participants were called to make a '**Rite of Commitment** one we would hope to be the commitment of all Franciscans and all people in the world who strive for peace and justice.

We represent many different Franciscan and other Church justice and development agencies of the Asia Pacific region; we stand in solidarity with and alongside the poor and the marginalized of the Asia Pacific, and on their behalf we seek to work closely with Franciscans International.

And so we pray, God of Justice and Compassion, of Truth and mercy;

We are your people, created in your image.

In our diversity we have strength; in our shared humanity we have a common hope of a vision that all God's people will be free.

We have come together to give thanks and o celebrate, to reflect and learn, and to re-commit ourselves to your work.

Shake us out of our complacency, rock our comfortable certainties and challenge us to recognize the face of Jesus our Brother in the face of our neighbour. In the spirit of Francis and Clare, and of the great leaders of the Asia Pacific who have guided people-centred non-violent change,

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we commit ourselves to work for deep and abiding change through building communities that are committed to human rights, sustainable development, peace building and ecological integrity.

Guide us to the heart of truth so that our work remains steadfast and so that through our work the poor will be poor no more.

On Monday the 3rd of March, 31 Franciscans began the training program on **Human Rights systems**. Each day began with prayer and ended in a celebration of the Eucharist, guiding and focussing us all on the task given to us.

Julie Morgan presented many of the sessions with great energy and zeal.

Her first session, **'Passion for Jesus: Compassion for the other: an introduction to Human rights**, brought us into focus on the task ahead of us.

Compassion for the other in the extreme messiness of life. The need to be able to show compassion and act in changing the situations, which make people poor and which keep the next generation poor!

Our faith in the Gospels and in Jesus Christ must be demonstrated in action, which brings about lasting change in the lives of the poor and the excluded, and lasting change in the lives of the powerful who benefit from the injustice, poverty and insecurity of others.

We are challenged through our Lord's example in **Being with and being for the other**.

The aim of our training was to give us the skills to be aware of contemporary forms of poverty and exploitation, to look at the notion of a vision of a better future for the marginalized and to come to understand the

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keys for change provided by the UN Human Rights system.

This was to be achieved by our attentiveness to the issues of poverty, shame, exclusion and isolation, untimely death, oppression, injustice and conflict. Our attention was drawn to the issues facing so many people in the Asia Pacific region.

We were challenged from our comfort zones to look from the other side of the door.

We were challenged to turn our compassion of the other into responsible action.

The invitation in the coming days was to be informed, and be involved with national and international decision-makers so that we can tell them the stories of intimacy with the leper,

So that we can tell them the stories of lives lived in fear, vulnerability and poverty, so that we too can work beside those decision makers in **making the world a better place for all**.

The core of the training program centred upon drawing our awareness and response to:

Being attentive: what does the United Nations say about Human rights?

Being intelligent: What does the Human rights system mean?

Being reflective: What does this new language mean for us today?

Being responsible: What action is necessary?

The sessions that followed, expanded our awareness and gave us greater insight and understanding into the work of the United Nations, the importance of Non Government Organisations such as **Franciscans International**, the need for covenants, correct and established procedures mechanisms and advocacy re issues relating to the rights of the poor and the marginalized.

We were confronted with stories of human trafficking, both adult and child abuse, slavery,

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torture, the problems in the developing world of HIV and AIDS, the rights of voiceless women in some cultures, prostitution, the effects of war, corruption, the suppression of the poor and environmental degradation.

Sessions specifically focussed upon:

- What are human rights and the Human Rights System
- The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
- The work of Franciscans International in the Franciscan family
- Civil and Political Rights
- Universal Periodic review
- Economic Social Cultural Rights
- The role of NGO's in bringing about change for human rights

Wednesday March 5th provided us with a great opportunity to visit the **United Nations ESCAP [The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok]**

This imposing building, [well secured] is the main office for the United Nations in the region.

ESCAP has a membership of 62 governments, 58 are in the region.

It is the largest UN body with over 600 staff.

ESCAP carries out work in 3 main areas:



- Poverty reduction

The Australian group

Sr Maureen Andrews MFIC, Helen Britton SFO,
Colin Fidock tssf, Helen Jarick SFO

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- Managing globalization
- Tackling emerging social issues

We were introduced to the role played by ESCAP and during the day heard various resource staff expand on the issues they confront and strive to alleviate with the support of NGO's.

Even though the task seemed overwhelming for us, we came to understand that with correct mechanisms in place positive outcomes and change can take place.

Responsible action: As participants we had been fortunate to be provided with considerable insight into Human Rights Systems. More time would have given us time for greater reflection but we were at least equipped to promote the work of Franciscans International, to forge links with Julie in Bangkok and bring back to our own countries information to help promote the good work done and to be done through our own regional office in Bangkok.

This of course cannot be achieved without the support not only of our own brothers and sisters through prayer and financial commitment but also to ensure that we as a fraternity strive to strengthen through awareness the work of human dignity, peace and sustainable development in the Asia pacific region.

We must BE the change we want to see in the world

We must INVEST in the change we want to see in the world

As Franciscans we are marked out because of our identity, because of our commitment to

Peace with justice

And to a way of thinking about Creation and humanity, which is based on integrity in our unique oneness.

Colin J Fidock tssf

More information on FI can be found at:

www.franciscansinternational.org