

THE THIRD ORDER

Australian Province Newsletter, PNG & East Asia

Stigmata/Franciscide Edition

Dear brothers and sisters,

Francis-tide is almost upon us again as we as a community rejoice together and celebrate the life and witness of our brother Francis and in turn dedicate in renewal our lives in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

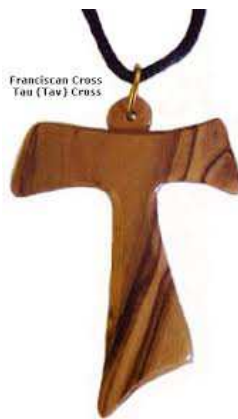
During my time in Simon's Town South Africa, the Provincials of our Order came together each morning in prayer. What a joy to be present with them as we prayed: **Here and in all your churches throughout the world, we adore you O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

During the prayer of the Community Obedience was again evident of how prayer binds us all as each Provincial prayed for our brothers and sisters as listed on our daily prayer cycle.

'The Ministers Provincial of the Third Order, meeting in Simons Town, SA re-emphasized the importance of praying daily the Community Obedience and affirmed that it is one of the marks of profession together with reporting, renewal and a financial offering. Particular reflection on the Principle of Day and praying for the order including Provincial and worldwide intercessions is of primary importance.'

The meeting over 3 full days provided opportunity for sharing developments in the life of our Provinces and discussing issues both internal and international. In due course a summary of the minutes will be available.

Our visit to South Africa, a land with many contrasts of wealth and poverty, midst a landscape of great beauty was an experience we shall not forget. It was with joy that we were hosted by our Franciscan brothers and sisters, by the parish of St Francis in Simon's Town and cared for so well by our host Nolan Tobias, Provincial of Africa.



One of our afternoons we were taken to the township of Masiphumelele. This was described in a city paper as an informal township. Conditions for the population of over 250,000 are difficult to describe. We were hosted to lunch of South African fare [delicious] at Noni's, a café in a converted container and then taken through this rambling township to visit a crèche and preschool and finally to the 'house to grow'.

South Africa has an estimated 2 million orphans as a result of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic. The problem is compounded by severe poverty and unemployment within marginalised communities. The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, has called on all parishes to provide and support a foster home for orphaned, abandoned, abused and HIV/AIDS-affected children, in accordance with scriptural injunctions. The St. Francis Outreach Trust, Simon's Town has responded to this call by providing poverty relief, assisting in finding work and training for the unemployed and building and managing foster homes in Masiphumelele. This trust was formed as an outreach of mission to the children of the Cape. It is linked in partnership as an official organization with the "Home from home", an organization which manages and assists over 30 foster homes in the Cape and is a Child protection agency. What a joy it was to meet Joyce and these happy children who showed us their home. The trust has been able to build one house and hopes in the future to build another so that 6 more children, many of whom will stay until aged eighteen, can be given love, education and a brighter future. The trust consisting of 8 members is also providing, medical support, speech therapy and remedial education. The need for children of the Cape is great but at least something is being done and done well with love and compassion.

The trust has forwarded to me information re their website: www.stfrancistrust.org and www.facebook.com/homestogrow. Please find time to appreciate the good work done by so few in helping others to be as God meant them to be.

May St Francis-tide and your renewal day be one of blessing to each of you.

Colin tssf



Provincials: B/R John Hebenton, John Brockman, Ken Norian MG, Colin Fidock, F/r Averil Swanton, Nolan Tobias, Mary Rogers sec.



House Mother, Joyce with her 6 special children on the day of our visit to the 'Home to grow'. 6 wonderful children from the ages of 5-7 years. It was a cold day.

Visit us on the web at www.tssf.org.au



Vic/Tas tertiaries gathered at All Saints
 Back Row - L to R: David Edmondson, Pauline Weston,
 Jeremy Ashton, Nathan Bush, Barbara Axton,
 Front Row - L to R. Colin Fidock, Patti Singleton, Audrey
 Edmondson, Helen Granowski, Pam Heyward

Celebration in Hobart, 13-15 September

By: Sandra Jackson

Back in November last year when we were planning our Victorian tssf program for 2013, Jeremy Ashton surprised us with a radical suggestion: Why not hold one of our gatherings in Tasmania so that we could meet up with our somewhat isolated Hobart tertiaries? Initially it all seemed a bit too daunting to organize, but in February we settled on a September visit and ten people indicated their interest in going. Then came the lovely idea of celebrating Helen Granowski's 80th – albeit a week early – with a birthday dinner while in Hobart. My role as area convenor was to make it all happen.

Along the way there have been disappointments and sadness: Sherrill Bryan died not long before our visit and her funeral on 16 September was just too late for us Victorians to be there; Jan and Michael Down missed out because their Tiger flight was cancelled; Sheila Leheup-Hill, with one arm in plaster after a fall, wasn't well enough to attend our gatherings – nor was Chris Hamann. We really missed them all!

For those who did take part – eight tertiaries from the mainland and four from Hobart – it was a really delightful weekend: three days of idyllic spring weather in which to enjoy wonderful fellowship, generous hospitality and worship together at All Saints, South Hobart. On the Saturday there was a small informal lunch most kindly provided by the vicar and his wife for Helen to spend time with the Edmondsons who were unable to come to the birthday dinner. Following that we had renewals during a tssf Eucharist celebrated by David Edmondson and on Sunday, Jeremy Ashton was guest preacher at the 10.15am Eucharist. Pam and Nigel Heyward offered us wonderful hospitality by inviting all of us back to their home for a splendid lunch. A well-kept secret, until his surprise appearance on Saturday, was Colin Fidock's presence in our festivities – so good to have him with us and, as Helen said, 'The best birthday present!' The birthday dinner itself, at Mures restaurant on the waterfront, was a very happy occasion. All in all, much for which to give thanks!



Jeremy Ashton proposes a toast to Helen for her 80th birthday
 Facing him - L to R: Nigel and Pam Heyward, Patti Singleton, Helen Granowski and Nathan Bush

A Suggestion for our Province

By: Sandra Jackson

Glenys McCarrick drew my attention to an article in the American *Franciscan Times* which Simon Fong kindly forwarded to us. In this article, John Brockman wrote about a TSSF ID and 'In-case-of-death' card, which is available to all tertiaries in the American Province. We thought that such a card is also needed in our Province where we have a number of isolated and elderly tertiaries.

This need was highlighted by the death of our sister, Sherrill Bryan, in September. Sherrill had no family in Hobart and lived alone, but fortunately a dear friend in a neighbouring unit found her TO PrayerCycle/Address Book with some cards that I had sent her and was thus able to phone and tell me that Sherrill had died. We would like Chapter to consider making available an actual card to keep in our wallets, as well as having the same message on the inside cover of our 2014 Prayer Cycle/Address Books. It could read something like this:

'Make me and instrument of thy Peace'

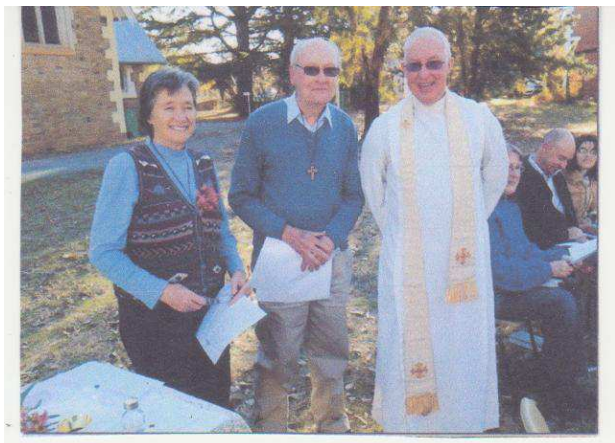
**Third Order
 Society of St Francis**
 (Name)
 Noviced/Professed (date)

**In case of death or serious illness,
 Please notify the TSSF Provincial Secretary**
 (Address)
 (Phone number)

Such notification would allow us to sit with and pray for our sisters and brothers in the event of serious illness and while they are dying as well as to represent the Order at their funeral. The card could also include a reminder to consider leaving something to TSSF in our wills. If you have any thoughts about this suggestion, please let me know so that we can discuss them at Chapter in May next year.

Franciscan Quiet Day Saturday May 25th 2013

BY: GRAEME DUNN



Left to right - Trish Stoddart, Geoffrey Taylor and John Gibson



Left to right - Ross Borchers being admitted as an Associate of the Third Order (holding the certificate), Anthony Frost and Gloria Dowling

Franciscan Quiet Day Saturday May 25th 2013

Members of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis met at Christ Church Queanbeyan in May for the annual Quiet Day and the Profession of a tertiary.

It was beautiful, mild and sunny when members gathered for a meditation and reflection day.

The morning session was a meditation on the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Magnificat. Members, in quietness wandered the grounds of the historic and beautiful church whilst others spent time sitting on the banks of the river in reflection.

The afternoon session was a brief meditation on the General Confession from the APBA, and what confession means to each of us.

The day concluded with an outdoor Eucharist celebrating the Franciscan Holy Day of Jack Winslow Missionary Priest and writer of the Third Order Principles. Our Regional Minister Venerable John Gibson gave the address based on John's gospel Chapter 12: 20 – 36.

At all the great moments of Jesus life God came to him and spoke to him in support. The great thing here is that the God who spoke to Jesus speaks to us continually if we stop and listen. When life's strains and struggles become too much for us, if we listen God will speak to us and we will gain immeasurable strength. Francis and Clare continually stopped and listened and gained strength, as did Jack Winslow Missionary Priest who searched for ways to live the Gospel in the context of the Indian culture in which he lived.

Following the address Geoffrey Taylor was professed as a Tertiary by Trish Stoddart. Geoffrey placed his Personal Rule of Life on the altar before receiving his Profession Cross as a symbol of his faith and professed member of the Third Order.

All members then welcomed Geoffrey into the Third Order. Ross Borchers was also made an Associate of the Third Order who while not under formal vows as members are, keeps a close association with the Third Order.

Ross was also welcomed warmly.

Regional Ministers

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I am delighted to advise and confirm that the election process for Regional Ministers has been completed.

Commencing on 1st August our regional ministers are:

- Queensland A - Victor Hall (new)**
- Queensland B - Glenys McCarrick (continuing)**
- New South Wales A - Jill Gumbley (new)**
- New South Wales B - John Gibson (continuing)**
- Victoria/Tasmania - Joy Bartlett (continuing)**
- South Australia - Joan Manners (continuing)**
- Western Australia - Sandie Oakes (new)**
- Malaysia - Bradley Sangon (new)**

We praise the Lord for these brothers and sisters and commend them to your ongoing prayers. May our Lord bless each one of you as you seek to serve Him, and follow Him in the footsteps of Francis.

We give thanks to the Lord for those who are stepping down from their leadership roles and for all that they have given during their respective terms as Regional Ministers:

- Queensland A - Elaine Jeston**
- New South Wales A - Esme Parker**
- Western Australia - Rae Witham**
- Singapore/Malaysia - Gerald Ng**

Blessings
Pace e bene!
David McAvenna tssf
Provincial Secretary

What is the Dark Night of the Soul – What is it?

By: Terry Gatfield *tssf*

In the last edition of the Franciscan Newsletter I wrote about Embracing Darkness. This edition I start on the subject of the Dark Night of the Soul.

Embracing darkness, which I suggest should be a common experience of all as we travel in Christ Jesus is a different order to the Dark Night of the Soul. This is a special gift of God. It may not seem a very pleasant experience as Eckhart Tolle indicates, *it is an eruption into your life of a deep sense of meaninglessness – a lengthy and prolonged absence of light and hope*. It is not perhaps encountered by every Christian. It is possible that some need it and perhaps some don't. God seems to choose its timing, depth and intensity. However, for those who desire to engage in a deeper prayerful spiritual consciousness and a passion to go deeper in obedience to God's calling on their life it is fairly certain that the Dark Night of the Soul will not remain a distant horizon for most on their Christian journey. It is a gift and a grace given by God.

Many have engaged with the Dark Night of the Soul. One source records that perhaps a quarter of the seekers on the road to higher consciousness will pass through that Dark Night. In fact, they may pass through several Dark Nights until they experience the profound joy of their true nature in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately I have noted than many who have encountered such an experience of what may seem to be like being sucked into a vortex of a black hole, did not embrace the gift at all well. Unfortunately the experience without understanding, teaching and nurture on the subject many have resulted in jettisoning their Christian faith. Their moral and virtuous values seem to have remained but the experience has seemed to cause a spiritual scaring that seldom seems to heal.

Origins of the term Dark Night of the Soul

The term Dark Night of the Soul appears in several disguises in the scriptures all of them related to that empty space where self and all its pretences are washed out and space is made for God to enter in a new, refreshing and unforeseen dimension. The in-journey events are legion in the scriptures and recorded though many including Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Jonah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Paul of Tarsus and Jesus. The metaphors used are many and they include the desert, the wilderness and even the belly of the whale. These events were not trivial on the run experiences read for example David's Psalm 22 and 88. The events is most often life changing, a catalyst where power and control of the individual gets crippled and God starts to take the reigns.

The story does not stop at the scriptures. It is difficult to read any of the early church fathers, mystics and theologians without encountering many of the personal stories and experience of the Dark Night of the Soul.

The phrase Dark Night of the Soul emerged not from the pen of the theologian but from the ink of a poet. St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), a Spanish Carmelite monk and mystic, whose poem was titled *Noche obscura del alma* which in translation reads The Dark Night of the Soul. The poem outlines the soul's journey from the distractions and entanglements of the world to the perfect peace and harmony of union with God.

*Once in the dark of night,
Inflamed with love and wanting, I arose
(O coming of delight!)
And went, as no one knows,
When all my house lay long in deep repose*

*All in the dark went right,
Down secret steps, disguised in other clothes,
(O coming of delight!)
In dark when no one knows,
When all my house lay long in deep repose.*

(finishing with the stanza)

*I stayed there to forget.
There on my lover, face to face, I lay.
All ended, and I let
My cares all fall away
Forgotten in the lilies on that day.*

The story will continue on the Dark Night of the Soul in future issues.

An Article – from Queensland Focus Magazine

June-July 2013 No 394,

“Hear the Ancient Wisdom”

from the Early Church to the Reformation

By: Charles Ringma

Another good read by the same author is

“Seek the Silences” with Thomas Merton



May God continue to bless Our Beloved Pope Francis
And his pilgrimage to visit his namesake!

Excerpt: www.franciscanfriars.org/files/events

Pope Francis visit to Assisi

A letter of the 23rd of May from Pope Francis to the Bishop of Assisi announced that the Holy Father has decided to undertake a pilgrimage to the city of St Francis on 4th of October.

As did Blessed John XXIII in 1962, Pope Francis will visit the tomb of the Patron saint of Italy as a simple pilgrim, taking part in the celebration of the lighting of the votive lamp there along with the Bishops of the area.

The New Provincial Secretary

By David White

Sisters and Brothers,

Unfortunately, David McAvenna who took over as Provincial Secretary earlier this year has had to relinquish this role.

The new Provincial Secretary is

Wayne Philp

11 Walcot St

Largs Bay SA 5016

Phone: 08 8341 6425

+618 8341 6425

To contact with the Provincial Secretary, please use the official email address, Provincial.Secretary@tssf.org.au.

Provincial Secretary responsibilities include - maintaining the register of members, including details of novicing and profession dates; managing nominations and ballots, as required, for regional and provincial ministers' elections; assisting the provincial minister as required, particularly managing items for Chapter (and if elected, to be minute secretary for Chapter)

David McAvenna and I will assist Wayne as he takes up his new role.

Thank you, David, for your work as Provincial Secretary this year, and as my assistant over the previous six months or so. It has been a pleasure working with you during this period, particularly at Chapter this year and last.

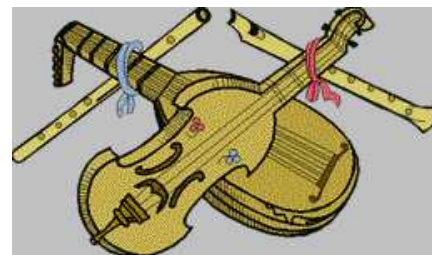
Wayne, we welcome you to your new role within the Third Order.

* * * * *

"Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance. Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor vexation. Where there is poverty and joy, there is neither greed nor avarice. Where there is peace and meditation, there is neither anxiety nor doubt."

URGENT Have you paid your 2013 subs? Many haven't Please take steps to rectify the situation ASAP Remember that payment of Subs is part of our renewal obligation.

Payment made by Direct Debit; Cheque/ Money Order with completed Subscription Invoice To - Geoff Jordan (Provincial Treasurer) 15 Streeton Court, Morayfield. Qld. 4506.



The Troubadour

Taken from the book "Francis The Journey and the Dream" - (page 42)

By: Murray Bodo

Francis loved to sing. It freed his spirit and turned the human voice, so often an organ of selfishness and sin, into an instrument of celebration. How he had thrilled to the songs of the French Troubadours, especially the great singers like Bernard of Ventadour, Pierre Vidal, Peirol of Auvergne. Every time one of their songs made its way to Assisi, Francis would be singing it for months afterward, entertaining his friends and delighting in their praise of his beautiful young voice.

Francis so loved this performing that once, before his conversion, he went so far as to have a Troubadour's costume tailored just for him. And he cut a pretty dashing figure, too, for the slight man that he was. He would start walking and acting like a minstrel the minute he put on his parti-coloured hose and pointed shoes, the hooded tunic with the lute slung behind. He reflected now how much his dress had always affected his behaviour. There was something in the simple tunic he put on that day he left his father that altered his whole bearing, from an important, vain Troubadour of Assisi to a poor little insignificant singer.

But his voice did not deteriorate. In fact, it sounded more beautiful to Francis, because now he was not trying to impress anybody. He was simply giving voice to the joy within him and to the beauty he saw all around him. Whenever he felt his heart constricting again, he could break into a song of joy and praise. Or he would remember a song of the Troubadours whose words he never had to change, so perfectly did they fit his Lady Poverty. There was one Arnaut Daniel that he specially loved:

*Softly sighs the April air Before the coming of May.
Joy is everywhere When the first leaf sees the day.
And shall I alone despair Turning from sweet love away?
Something to my heart replies, You too were for rapture strung.
Why else the dreams that arise Round you when the year is young?*

Yes, a thousand times, yes! Francis loved that image of himself as a lute strung for rapture. He wanted to stand in the wind of April afternoons and let the Holy Spirit play upon him for all the world to hear the beauty of his music. And in every season he tried to be strung and tuned for the hand of Jesus to play upon His poor little instrument, made perfect and resonant by the skill of Jesus Himself.

St Francis of Assisi

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.

By: Kahlil Gibran (1926)



Qld A Retreat 14-15th June 2013

Back Row: Philip Bentley, Lavinia Robinson, Bishop Godfrey Fryar, Nell Weir, Elaine Jeston

Front Row: Ivan McCulloch, Betty Daly, Valmai Carson, Bernice Goon-Chew, Vic Hall.

Retreat – Queensland A – Franciscan Themes

By: Nell Weir

Our Annual retreat was held at The House of Prayer and Spirituality, Townsville, on the 14 and 15 June, 2013. Our Retreat Presenter was Bishop Godfrey Fryar, Bishop Protector of the Australian Province.

The Retreat began on Friday evening with Evening Prayer at 6.30pm., followed by dinner at 7.00pm.

Our first session's theme on Friday evening was *Ambition*. Bishop Godfrey spoke about Francis's early life and his father Pietro's ambition for his son, comparing it to Matthew Chapter 20:20 when the mother of the sons of Zebedee asked for favourable treatment of her sons. Jesus explains that leadership means serving. Throughout the sessions Bishop Godfrey referred to Richard Curtis' book *In Search of the Lost*, about the martyrdom of the Melanesian Brothers.

Saturday morning began with breakfast at 7.00am, followed by Morning Prayer, incorporating the Community Obedience Prayer.

The second session's theme was *Humility*. We looked at Francis being involved in war with Assisi and Perugia. He went to prison, and then was sent home. He later set out for battle again. It was then he had an internal struggle with his actions. The Lord spoke to him and asked him to "Rebuild my church". This turned Francis's life around. Bishop Godfrey likened it to the story of the Prodigal son in Luke Chapter 15.

A time of Quiet for reflection was held until the Eucharist at 12.00 followed by lunch at 1.00pm.

Our third session looked at Francis, whilst repairing the little Church of the Portiuncular, he received the Lord's instructions, which finally made his mind up for the kind of life meant for him. The comparison was made to God speaking to Moses in the burning bush in Exodus Chapter 3. Bishop Godfrey asked us if we had received an empowering word that seemed to come from God. A quiet time followed until Evening Prayer at 5.30pm.

Bishop Bill Ray and our spouses joined us for dinner at 6.00pm, during which we acknowledged the celebration of one of our Tertiaries, Betty Daly's 80th Birthday.

Our final session looked at how Francis started to attract followers. The clergy thought he was a heretic. The Franciscans were too joyful to join the Benedictines. The poor warmed to Francis's ideas. A proper Rule was adopted. The Order received recognition in Rome from Pope Innocent III.



Left to Right

Betty Daly, Elaine Jeston, Kevin Kingswell (groom), Andrea (bride), Nell Weir, Rosemary Reid(enquirer), Vic Hall, Bernice Goon-Chew, Ivan McCulloch.

* * * * *

Referring to Richard Carter's book *In Search of the Lost*, Bishop Godfrey said the Melanesian Brothers were an inspiration. They were real evangelists, with echoes of the Franciscan movement. Our retreat closed with Compline.

Our tertiaries had plenty of quiet time to reflect on Francis's story, and what bearing it can have on our lives. Francis was drawn towards a life of simplicity, believing this to be the example of Christ.

* * * * *

Franciscan Heritage

A gentle journey through Italy
Private touring will include Verona, Padua, Venice, Ravenna, Gubbio, La Verna, Assisi, Orvieto, Rome, Florence, Siena, Pisa, San Gimignano, Cinque Terre, Milan
Accommodation, sightseeing, entrances, tips and most meals are all included.

Tour Departs 03 May 2014, 20 Days from \$5945 (Land only)

Hosted by Brother Daniel SSF
Minister General (Retired)

Canterbury Tours

Ph/Fx: (07) 3345 9423

info@canterburytours.net

or TRAVELMARKETBRISBANE

PH: (07) 3210 0323



FRIAR UPDATE Volume 6, Issue no. 7 12 June 2013

**Office of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of
Creation Franciscan Provincial Office**
47 Victoria Street, WAVERLEY NSW 2024
Telephone: (02) 9369 9309 Fax: (02) 9369 9322

16-22 June 2013

The Refugee Council of Australia has chosen Restoring Hope as the Refugee Week theme for 2012 to 2014.

The theme reminds us that, while a refugee's journey begins with danger, it also begins with hope. Refugees flee their homelands not only because they fear persecution, but also because they have hope: they hope to find freedom from persecution, and safety and security for themselves and their families; they hope to be given a chance to start a new life and recover from past trauma. The theme also calls attention to the role of countries which, through offering protection to refugees and providing them an opportunity to rebuild their lives, restore hope for a future free from fear, persecution, violence and insecurity.

Finally, the theme aims to highlight the situation of refugees whose hopes have not been fulfilled – those who remain in seriously protracted situations, facing ongoing discrimination, violence and uncertainty, with little hope for a resolution in the near future. The theme calls on us to consider how we can provide solutions for these refugees and restore their hopes for a brighter future.

For more information and resources: <http://>



A Clare Benediction

By: John Rutter
(Sent to Merrill Ruback
from Simon Fong)

May the Lord show his mercy upon you;
may the light of his presence be your guide:
May he guard you and uphold you;
may his spirit be ever by your side.

When you sleep may his angels watch over you;
when you wake may he fill you with his grace:
May you love him and serve him all your days
Then in heaven may you see his face.

“YOU SILENT POWER”

If you go away ...
If you go away
beyond the horizon
out of life
to where my words wing
where my prayers become present
hold out in the hollow of your hands
a drop of water
for me to wash my lips
so they may sing to you
You my secret
You silent power
at the heart of my life.

- Translated by Ted Witham



Old Area B - Retreat
Glendalough - Sunshine Coast

Inspiration

By: Dawn Punter

St. Francis
of Assisi
*Lover of
all Creation*

In the quiet of our retreat did you hear the whispering
of the breeze?
Did you hear the trees whispering in reply to the breeze?
Did you hear the little mynah bird chirping to his mate?
Did you see the red bottle brush sharing its pollen with
the rosella?
Did you see the colours of the rosella?
Did you notice the azure sky, so clear and blue with no
pollution? ‘
Did you feel the sun rising and warming the whole
atmosphere?
Did you see the white clouds so much like lambs passing
by?
Did you hear Mr and Mrs Magpie sorting out their
domestic arrangements?
Did you hear the crow announcing it was breakfast time?
Did you hear the whirr of the sprinkler giving the lawn a
very welcome drink?
Did you hear the drone of a friendly aircraft overhead?
Did you feel the restfulness of the big black dog lying
outside the door while we ate, complacent, knowing
we came in peace?
Did you feel the plovers making arrangements for the
arrival of their family?
Did you hear the ghecko welcoming us to the chapel?
Did you feel the love and peace which flowed to send us
on our journeys?
They were there, **Our Lord, Frances and Clare.**

Remember when you leave this earth, you can take with you
nothing that you have received only what you have given:
A heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.
St Francis of Assisi

STROUD MONASTERY – MUDDIES REUNION

22-24 November, 2013

All are welcome to celebrate the building of the Stroud Monastery with all those who had a connection or who participated in the early days of the establishment of the Order of St Clare Monastery and the Hermitage.

From the Monastery beginnings to the completion of the Gunyah Chiara

Were you there ? or did you know the Sisters of St Clare at the mud brick Monastery at Stroud last century?

The Friends of the Monastery at Stroud want YOU to help celebrate the story of the buildings of the Society of St Francis, the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Stroud with the Hermitage of St Bernardine

Come and stay as long as you can for the shared memories and renewed friendship with

Speakers

Your Stories

Mud Brick Making

Celebratory Worship

Historical displays

Day visitors welcome

ENQUIRIES or Memorabilia to
rosemary.christmas@gmail.com

Limited Accommodation at Monastery, Gunyah

Chiara Book Early,

Samaritans Office 02 49601700

THE MONASTERY AT STROUD:

Yesterday and Today

By: Rosemary Christmas

In 1972, at the invitation of the Bishop of Newcastle Ian Shevill, a group of Sisters of St Clare arrived in Australia from Freeland, Oxford, England and were accommodated in the St Johns Rectory at Stroud. The number of Sisters grew and were in need of some long term larger accommodation.

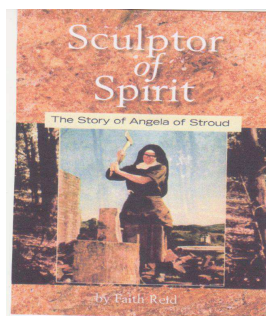
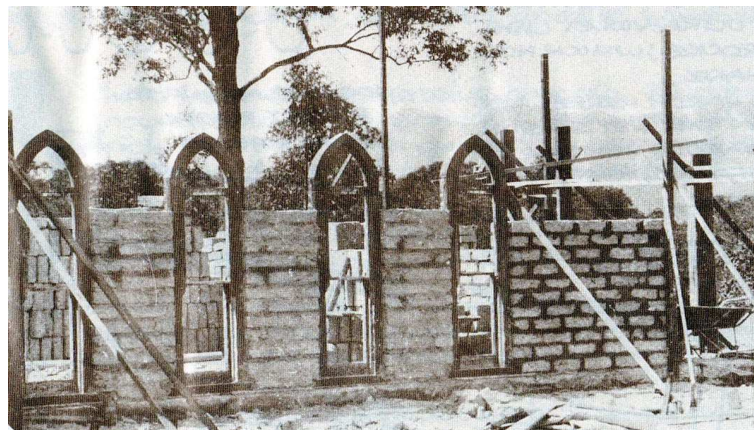
The opportunity of building a monastery nearby emerged and the sisters' vision became a reality in 1980 with the help of many volunteers.

Sr Angela was a renowned sculptress from her early years. The building of the monastery was a work of sculpture. "We built a mudbrick monastery and people come to it and pick up something that is imparted to them from the place ... It's got nothing to do with bricks and mortar ... it was made from the earth ... this place will live on whatever happens because love formed it".

"I long to see writers and theologians, artists and students coming to spend time at Stroud to study and work and to join in the rhythm of prayer and worship." (Quotes from the recent book "Sculptor of Spirit: Angela of Stroud." Faith Read)

By the year, 2000, for various reasons, there were no Sisters of St Clare in occupation of the monastery.

Sr Angela had ill health and moved to America where she died in 2002.



On the life of Sister Angela of Stroud

The Samaritans and the Parish of St Johns took over management of the monastery to help until the Friends of the Monastery and the Management Committee was formed. The Samaritans still take the bookings for this "haven of peace and beauty". See Stroud@samaritans.org.au Phone 02 49607100

Income comes only from the bookings and the "Friends of the Monastery Stroud" membership. Please help by becoming a member and receiving the Newsletter.

(Annual Membership Fee \$21.00. Concession \$15.00 to "Friends of the Monastery Stroud Inc." PO Box 247 Cherrybrook. N.S.W. 2126.)

The Management Committee volunteers meet monthly to maintain the property and bookings under an agreement with the Society of St Francis Trust.

Since the 2nd Order Sisters of St Clare have gone, the 1st Order Brothers with the 3rd Order Tertiaries are now the caretakers for the whole property – a serious and important responsibility for Tertiaries.

Perhaps many Tertiaries do not realize that they are inheritors of this remarkable place.!

Such a unique retreat and centre is a marvelous legacy and one we need to nurture and treasure sharing the Franciscan world view of reverence for life and sustainability so needed for the world today.

"We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way." – [St. Francis of Assisi](#)

Ken Norian, TSSF

Ministers Provincial Meeting 2013
Minister General's Report

Reflecting that as I write this it will be almost two years since I transitioned into this role. Also thinking that in a year I will be celebrating 25 years of profession in TSSF, all that it's meant to me, how much a part of my life it has become and how by some unlikely twist of fate I find myself writing as Minister General and thinking about what that means.

Those in whose footsteps I follow were all clergy, one of them is now a Bishop. And me.... I work on Wall Street – God does work in mysterious ways. When I began my journey in the Third Order I had hair, a brown beard and lots of youthful enthusiasm. I now have almost no hair left, my beard is gray, I'm not youthful but.... I've still got lots of enthusiasm for a community of Christians who seek to follow Christ after the example of Francis of Assisi.

I can still remember when the role of Minister General did not exist, when the Third Order was an appendage of the First Order. I was professed by Alden Whitney, a former Minister General. For posterity sake, since it's easy to forget, these are the Ministers Generals since we were so organized:

Brian Hamilton, 1993-1996, Alden Whitney, 1996-1999, Keith Slater, 1999-2005, and Dorothy Brooker 2005-11.

Not that long ago, the Minister General communicated with other provinces via post (mail) and every two year meetings. The international flavor and cohesiveness of the Third Order was in an embryonic phase. Now, thankfully, we are able to share thoughts and ideas in real time via email.

Honestly, the role of MG requires much less time than those who are serving as Minister's Provincial. Having said that, when things come across my virtual desk they usually have much significance and require an attentiveness to history – and the future. I have come to see my role as one of understanding our past, integrating that with our present reality and envisioning what we are growing into. I am fortunate to have a reasonably close relationship with Clark, the 1st Order MG. I wish that I were able to spend the time he does visiting all of the provinces and being able to get to know all of the brothers in their communities. Short of being retired, unemployed or independently wealthy, that model just isn't viable for a Third Order Minister General. So, I pray for God's grace to enable me to continue to build our sense of a worldwide order amidst all the incredible diversity of geopolitical, theological and socioeconomic circumstances that we find ourselves in among our five provinces.

We are bound together by a common Rule. How we express that must be flexible enough to accommodate our diversity and still respect that which binds us together as a community of Anglican Franciscan Christians.

I rejoice in the fact that we are able to gather in the African Province, within which the diversity that Nolan speaks of is very present. I hope, over the next few years, to be able to visit each of our provinces. The members of our respective provinces for the most part are nourished in their individual ministries by their connection with their provincial community. I hope that we can all reinforce the notion that we are part of a global community, and that we are enriched by what we share in common – and by what we can continue to learn from and about each other.

I pray that our time together will accomplish what we need to do practically to continue to build a cohesive worldwide community and that the fellowship we share amongst ourselves will be able to be communicated to each and every sister and brother in our respective provinces.

Ken tssf Minister General

Feastdays in September

This month one of the very special feasts that we celebrate is the Stigmata of St Francis on the 17th September. Other feasts of importance are the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the 8th; St Joseph of Cupertino, on the 18th and Padre Pio of Pietrelcina on the 23rd.

Birthday of Mary – 8th September

Francis had great devotion to Mary as does all his followers.

Feast of the Stigmata of St Francis – 17th September
Francis had a burning love for the Crucified and never ceased to preach this devotion. In 1224, two years before his death, as he was lost in deep contemplation on Mount La Verna, the marks of Christ's passion were imprinted on his body.

A Thanksgiving Prayer

By: Samuel F. Pugh

“O God, when I have food,
help me to remember the hungry;
When I have work,
help me to remember the jobless;
When I have a home,
help me to remember those who
have no home at all;
When I am without pain,
help me to remember those who suffer,
And remembering,
help me to destroy my complacency;
bestir my compassion,
and be concerned enough to help;
By word and deed, those who cry out
for what we take for granted.
Amen.”

A Franciscan Cross – The Tau

By Ken Norian, TSSF

Taken from

The Third Order Society of St Francis

Province Of the Americas

www.tssf.org/tao.shtml



The first recorded reference to the TAU is from Ezekiel 9:4, “Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a TAU on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.” The TAU is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and looks very much like the letter “T”.

At the Fourth Lateran Council, on November 11, 1215, Pope Innocent made reference to the TAU and quoted the above verse in reference to the profaning of the Holy Places by the Saracens. It is widely accepted that St. Francis was present at the Fourth Lateran Council and that he heard the words of Pope Innocent III when he said, “The TAU has exactly the same form as the Cross on which our Lord was crucified on Calvary, and only those will be marked with this sign and will obtain mercy who have mortified their flesh and conformed their life to that of the Crucified Savior. From then on, the TAU became Francis’ own coat of arms.

Francis used the TAU in his writings, painted in on the walls and doors of the places where he stayed, and used it as his only signature on his writings.

St. Bonaventure said, “This TAU symbol had all the veneration and all the devotion of the saint: he spoke of it often in order to recommend it, and he traced it on himself before beginning each of his actions.”

Celano, another Franciscan historian writes, “Francis preferred the Tau above all other symbols: he utilized it as his only signature for his letters, and he painted the image of it on the walls of all the places in which he stayed.”

In the famous blessing of Brother Leo, Francis wrote on parchment, “May the Lord bless you and keep you! May the Lord show His face to you and be merciful to you! May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace! God bless you Brother Leo!” Francis sketched a head (of Brother Leo) and then drew the TAU over this portrait.

Due, no doubt, in large part to Francis’ own affection for and devotion to the TAU, it has been a well recognized and accepted Franciscan symbol among Franciscans of various denominations and of all orders within those denominations for centuries. It remains so today. The TAU carries with it all of the symbolism of the Cross of Christ as well as Francis’ ideal of life and dream for himself and his followers.

The Prayer without Ceasing

From: “Wisdom From Franciscan Italy – The Primacy of Love”,

Excerpt from chapter 8, Page 148

As he persevered in trying to turn to God in prayer, no matter how dark and exacting it became, Francis discovered that he received strength that he had never received before. It enabled him to turn to God outside of prayer too – in those who were poor and needy. The first time that he realized was when, instead of running away from lepers, he kissed them on the mouth and tended their wounds.

Gradually he came to realize that practicing repentance inside of prayer is the way to observe the first of the new commandment outside of prayer, which is “to love your neighbour as you love yourself”. It was in this way that Francis came to practice what the scriptures call the “prayer without ceasing” as every moment of every day became a time for turning to God. As he wrote in his rule, “Idleness is the enemy of the soul and so those who serve God should always be busy praying or doing good” (Rule if 1221).

PRAYER

From: AOTEAROA PSALMS

By: Joy Cowley

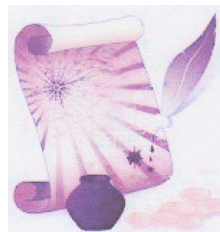
Sent to me by Michelle Blondel

“Don’t call me, God, I’ll call you.
Well, I don’t mean it to be that way.
It’s just that prayer tends to be on my terms,
when I’ve got the time and inclination,
and even then, I do all the talking,
as though God didn’t already know
what was in my heart.

Yes, I am aware that conversation
is a two-way business
but I guess it’s easier for me to talk
because I have a bit of a hearing problem,
and God’s voice is so terribly quiet
that listening can be hard work.
It means tuning into a huge silence
in order to pick up a whisper or two.

I’m not good with silences.
They make me feel disconnected.
I want to shout down the line:
“Are you working? Is anybody there?”
I think I need some practice,
still times to sit with silence
and feel comfortable in it
so that I recognize the voice when it comes.

And who knows? Maybe one day I’ll
discover that the best part of prayer
is to let God do most of the talking.



From
the
Editor,

Dear brothers and sisters,

This issue includes many Regional community gatherings.

I was fortunate enough to attend our Qld Area B Retreat at Glendalough at the Sunshine Coast 3-5th September. I came home inspired and spiritually nourished. I felt in awe of the atmosphere we all shared with each other learning about the Formation of the Order, sharing the Eucharists and learning so much about the Order of St Francis and Clare. Thanks to Glenys McCarrick for her leadership, support and Franciscan spirit.

Thank you to those who contributed to this Issue. I always enjoy hearing from you all and sharing your faith journey. The next issue is the Advent Issue. It is a time for quiet reflection, prayer and conversion in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ.

The deadline for The Advent Newsletter will be 20th November. One request to those who send in photos for inclusion, please ensure that the photos are jpgs and they have high resolution, as it makes it easier for me to work with.

I look forward to receiving articles for possible inclusion in the next issue.

Blessings and peace,
Gloria