

The Province of Asia-Pacific NEWSLETTER



AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THAILAND

A d v e n t

E d i t i o n

PROVINCIAL MINISTER'S ADVENT LETTER 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write to you as we journey through Advent towards Christmas.

I must say I enjoy this season with its purple solemnity, marked with increasing threads of gold, with its rich hymns that we only sing at this time of the year, and the great hope of our annual celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas.

It is a very earthy season, taking us through the call to be alert, for our master will return unexpectedly, both in our meeting with him in our death and at the end of time; taking us on to stand under the very uncomfortable ministry of John the Baptist, and finally to the Annunciation of a pregnancy for Mary... All very sweaty and earthy, really.

In his letter to all the faithful, our father Francis wrote: *Behold the Word of the Father, so worthy, so holy so glorious who's coming the Most High Father announced from heaven, in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, through his holy Angel Gabriel. From the Virgin Mary's womb he received our flesh and frailty. 'Although he was rich', and was placed above all things, he nevertheless decided, together with the Most Holy Virgin Mary his mother, to choose poverty in this world.*

Being involved in messy earthiness and deep engagement with what is less than tidy and fragrant is what God does, and Francis embraced this in full measure.

Involvement in this messiness is somehow easier to contemplate and respond to in the brokenness of creation and human life in the poor and needy, than it is where it is often closest to us in the life of the Church.

Francis very clearly recognised brokenness in the Church of his day, and yet never sought to overturn it as a zealous reformer, or turn away from it in disappointment or anger. He sought its blessing for the protection of the brothers, and above all because he could see that the Church in all its failure to live the gospel life, was still the Body of Christ and was the place where grace could be found.

The Franciscan Third Order is no para-church organisation that can exist in its own right apart from the Church. However much it may have irritated us or at times even wounded us, we cannot stand apart from it.

It is said that there are three great humiliations of God, the Incarnation, the Cross and the Church, and just as the Son of God was willing to endure and embrace humanity and human



nature in the Incarnation, and in the blood, pain and injustice of Calvary, so he also endures it in his Church which he embraces with compassion.

Oscar Romero quoted in "Love must win out" by Kevin Clark* said:

Christ founded the Church so that he himself could go on being present in the history of humanity, precisely through the group of Christians who make up his Church. The Church is the flesh in which Christ makes present down the ages his own life and personal mission.

The Church is in so many ways a messy place, and yet it is where we as Franciscan Christians are meant to be. We need to remember that at times we can be as much a part of the mess as a leaven-like solution. Our calling is to be compassionate to the Church and also to be recipients of its compassion... a little like Advent, penitential purple yet increasingly shot through with threads of gold!

Peace be with you.

+Godfrey

*Liturgical Press Collegeville Minnesota 2014.

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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TRIBUTES

TO

COLIN FIDOCK

From: The Rt Revd Godfrey Fryar
Provincial Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I begin my term as your next Provincial Minister very mindful of our dear brother **Colin Fidock**, whom I have been elected to succeed in this ministry.

In our very dispersed family of tertiaries in Asia Pacific we often don't meet each other face to face, but we do meet each month in the prayer cycle.

I did however meet Colin twice. The first time was in Longreach where Bronwyn and I were based there, spending three weeks around Holy Week and Easter as part of my pastoral care of western parishes in the Diocese of Rockhampton. Colin flew up to catch up with me in my role as Bishop Protector as well as visiting us as fellow tertiaries.

The second occasion was quite recently when Colin came to Brisbane to spend a few days with us as part of the hand over prior to my becoming Provincial Minister.

Colin epitomised for me what being a tertiary was all about in his humility and grace. One of the marvellous things about the Third Order is that there is no distinction between ordained or lay people when it comes to holding the office of Provincial Minister. I think it is marvellous that Colin held the position as a layperson, and to him we all gave honour and respect. He stood among us very much as one who served in that deep Franciscan way of following Jesus.

I now very much look forward to drawing on his wisdom and experience.

+Godfrey

TRIBUTES FROM CHAPTER TO OUR PROVINCIAL

From: Sandra Jackson, Asst. Provincial

It has been a privilege to be Colin's assistant during his term as Provincial Minister. In his last email to me about matters Franciscan he began: 'Hi dear sister' and it as a very dear brother in Christ that I think of Colin - and suspect that others do so too. He has cared deeply about fostering that fraternal relationship within our Order, exemplifying Francis's admonition, 'let your gentleness draw them to peace, goodness and concord'. I have seen in our working together the depth of his commitment to the three aims of the Third Order and his love and concern for each one of us. As with Francis, Colin gave his 'Yes' wholeheartedly to God when called to serve, even when the responsibilities of that service have been costly in terms of health - a true shepherd of his flock.

From Helen Granowski, Chaplain

Colin Fidock has been a circling planet in our tssf galaxy for many moons but I only ever saw him as a passing heavenly body. A rather distant twinkling star that helped to light up my Franciscan world with an occasional flash of enlightenment. That all changed when he came to Melbourne after his election and became for me the most approachable, wise and accessible human being imaginable. And a truly loveable one. I am indeed grateful for having got to know him better. Not to mention his hidden talents which few outside his immediate circle have experienced. When Gloria asked me to contribute something about Colin from a Chaplain's point of view I racked my brains but came up a blank. For Colin is too deep a person and anything I could say sounded trite. I agonised about it, as words do not come easily to me unless fired with emotion. And my feelings about Colin are anything but superficial. So as I said my prayers I thought of a strategy which seemed the answer. So the result is the contributions that are included.

From: Joy Bartlett, VIC/TAS

Well done good and faithful servant.

I have enjoyed our journey together. Go well, go safely my friend.

From: Bronwyn Fryar Queensland B (Regional Minister)
Reflections on Colin's time as Provincial Minister

Colin lives out being Franciscan in a very intentional and prayerful way and this has been a gift to the Order in Australia during his three years as Provincial Minister. The humility, love and joy that are to mark our lives are clearly seen in his approach to his own journey and to his time of leadership.

Colin has travelled widely in his time and this has built community, so important for us in our dispersed life. We have so enjoyed the times he has stayed with Godfrey and I in Longreach in far western Qld as well as in Brisbane.

I was present at one chapter meeting in his time as Provincial Minister. He chaired this meeting with wisdom, gentleness and good humour, inclusive of all. I have been impressed with the way he has dealt so efficiently with email (which can be overwhelming in volume!) and telephone matters. This shows great discipline. His style of leading us has been one where he has encouraged others to use their gifts while always taking responsibility for the matters that are his to deal with.

We wish Colin peace and all good as he "lays up" his Provincial Minister role. He has been a blessing to us in the way he has carried it - aware of its weightiness but carrying it lightly and joyfully.

His legacy has been one of love for us all as brothers and sisters in the community of TSSF.

From: Sandie Oakes, Regional Minister, SA

I so enjoyed meeting Colin at Chapter this year and was sorry to hear that he is retiring as PM but wish to thank him for all that he has done in serving tssf and glad that he and Dany spent time in South Africa where Roger and I lived for 30 years prior to moving to WA. Colin and Dany we thank you and wish you every blessing as you continue to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pax et Bonum

From: John Gibson NSW B/Act (Regional Minister)

I begin by thanking Colin for his leadership as our Provincial Minister and especially during those times where health issues were a real challenge to him.

Whether leading us at Chapter meetings or dealing with local matters within our region, Colin paid attention to the issue/s and matters before us. His leadership has been gentle and sensitive.

Colin gave of himself unstintingly and his support and availability in my ministry as a Regional Minister is something which I have appreciated and am thankful for.

His visits and reports to us beyond our Province gave us a glimpse of the world and of our Franciscan family through wider glasses.

I have found Colin's Provincial Letters in our Newsletter to be challenging but always encouraging.

By way of example his quote from Richard Rohr "*The word of God (calls us to action and is) telling us very clearly that if you do not do it, you in fact, do not believe it and have not heard it. (James 1:19-27). The only way we can become convinced of the power of the Spirit given to each of us is by actually doing it - crossing the line, a line that has a certain degree of nonsensicalness and improbability to it - and that's why it's called faith* —" Colin concluded that particular letter with the challenge "**Let us stretch that God might be**" (Pentecost Edition 2013).

Thank you Colin for your servant ministry to us.



From: David White Provincial Communications Coordinator

It is just over three years since Colin visited WA to be briefed by Ted in preparation for his role as Provincial Minister. Since then, Colin has guided the Province in his calm and considered way. It was a privilege to work with him both as Provincial Secretary and as Communications Coordinator. I have appreciated his wisdom and guidance during this time, both in the intense few days when Chapter meets, but also over the intervening weeks and months. Colin has put tremendous effort into leading us, and he deserves the less hectic pace that standing down from the role will provide. Thank you, Colin, for all you have done.

From: Jill Gumley, Regional Minister, NSW A

Colin has been the epitome of a generous spirit to me. He recognised it does take time to understand all the nuances of Regional Minister and has been a sane a sensible voice in assisting me in that area. I also appreciate his deep Christian/Franciscan approach to all matters relating to the SSF Third Order and where the Third Order fits in the scheme of things generally. How we should be measured and careful with our responses in the community; Thank you Colin for being an excellent example of a sound leader. Peace and Love,

From: Wayne Philp, Provincial Secretary

As a relative newcomer to our family of brothers and sisters with St Francis and St Clare, I am very fortunate to have Colin Fidock as my friend within the South Australian Region. Colin has shown me the love of a brother in Christ in ways that many clergy never know. He is a real friend and a true disciple: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; if you have love one for another." (John 13:35)

During Colin's latter phase as The Provincial our brother David McAvenna was no longer able to continue in his role as Secretary, so Colin asked if I would stand in the gap until his term was complete. I have done so for just a year. But even though the duty has been short, it has been a great honour and a delight for me (as one only recently professed) to have met so many of our Order at Provincial Chapter and in general circulation.

It has truly been a pleasure to work with Colin as his Secretary and to have had the opportunity to share some of his mind and his heart in the daily affairs of our Province. Colin puts so much time and thought into how to navigate a safe course without hurting anyone else's feelings. He is always concerned for the other. He is a good man! He remains my good friend. It has been a privilege.

Thank you Colin for your excellent and diligent work as Provincial Minister and I look forward to our ongoing journey together with St Francis and St Clare in Jesus our Christ.

From: Vic Hall, Regional Minister, Qld A:

When asked to reflect on Colin's term as Provincial Minister, the Beatitudes comes to mind.

The blessing of being poor in spirit is the gift of gratefulness.
The blessing of mourning is the gift of compassion.
The blessing of meekness is the gift of the freedom to be courageous.
The blessing of those who hunger and thirst for justice is the gift of profound awareness.
The blessing of those who are merciful is the gift of kindness.
The blessing of those pure of heart is the gift of vision.
The blessing of the peacemakers is the gift of openness.
Beatitudes I believe flow through Colin's whole life and gifts each and every one of us.
Yours in Christ,



From: Glenys McCarrick (Provincial Treasurer)

Thank you so much for being a caring Provincial Minister. We really did appreciate your Prayerful Leadership.

You have suffered much pain, quietly and with dignity. For our whole Community, we are so sorry for the burdens we placed on you in your distress and ill health.

We have seen you travel far and wide to represent and lead our Third Order Community. You have directed us in JPIC, Franciscan Federation of Australia and Franciscans International.

You have discussed Francis over coffee at the airport and in a dinghy in PNG. You have been a beacon of Christ's Love in our world.

You have brought much Joy to those you visited locally. You gently lead and encouraged the gifts within us.

And now for a much needed rest . . .
With Blessings from ALL the Tertiaries of your Province

* * * * *



The Kontakon

From the Prayer Book.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.

You only are immortal, the creator and maker of all:
we are mortal, formed from the dust of the earth.

We all go down to the dust;
and weeping at the grave we make our song:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.

The journey of prayer for Franciscans is the discovery of God at the centre of our lives. We pray not to acquire a relationship with God as if acquiring something that did not previously exist. Rather, we pray to disclose the image of God in which we are created, the God within us, that is, the one in whom we are created and in whom lies the seed of our identity. We pray so as to discover what we already have— "the incomparable treasure hidden in the field of the world and of the human heart.(St. Clare)"

A TRIBUTE TO NOLAN TOBIAS tssf

By: Mary Rogers tssf [Provincial Secretary,
African Province]

Brother Nolan was a humble and caring man, deeply imbued with a sense of vocation to follow the teaching of the Gospels as demonstrated by Blessed Francis. His untimely death has left us with a feeling of disbelief; and a void in the lives of his Franciscan brothers and sisters in the Third Order, that will be difficult to fill.

His membership of the First Order Brothers in the UK and his work amongst the deprived and destitute in the major cities in England and Scotland were a source of fulfilment and joy to him.

When circumstance at home in Cape Town required his return to South Africa he was faced with an extremely difficult choice; as there were no other First Order Brothers here, he was obliged to withdraw from the First Order and found a new home amongst the Third Order.

He was a much loved member of the Cape Town Group and was the obvious choice when the position of Minister Provincial became vacant five years ago. In this position he became responsible for tertiaries throughout Africa and visited them in Ghana, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe. At our Chapter in Durban a month ago he was enthusiastically making plans to visit Zambia and Uganda. Nolan was a familiar figure in many airports carrying his carefully wrapped Damiano Cross, which was always a prominent feature at our Third Order gatherings. Another major feature of any gathering where Nolan was present was his love of music and his wonderful singing voice. His adaptation and enhancement of services with musical versions from around the world were inspirational.

Nolan represented Africa at the General Chapter in New York and was host to a gathering of Ministers Provincial from America, Europe, New Zealand and Australia in Simonstown in September of last year. He was scheduled to meet up with his fellow Ministers Provincial in New Zealand next year. He had great tales to tell about all his trips and took hundreds of photographs, which he was always happy and eager to share.

In 2012 he led a party of Southern Region tertiaries on a pilgrimage to Assisi and having visited before whilst based in England, proved to be a wonderful guide, full of information and anecdotes for his fellow sojourners. During a visit to the Little Portion Chapel he was able to renew his Life Vows, this was a source of great satisfaction for him.

The members of Nolan's Franciscan family share in the deep grief felt by his siblings and extended family. He is cherished and will be forever in our hearts.

Pax et Bonum dear brother and rest in peace.

He who works with his hands is a laborer.
He who works with his hands and his head
is a craftsman.
He who works with his hands and his head
and his heart is an artist."

- [Francis of Assisi](#)

St. Francis and the Christmas Creche

By: St. Bonaventure (d. 1274) "Life of St. Francis of Assisi"

It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem. A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvellously beautiful, sleeping in the manger, whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep. This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it, but by reason of the miracles which afterwards confirmed its truth. For example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying his servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles.

Although the story is long old, the message is clear for us. We recall our own Nativity scenes which rest under our Christmas trees are a visible reminder of that night when our Savior was born.

May we never forget to see in our hearts the little Babe of Bethlehem, who came to save us from sin. This is a constant reminder that the wood of the manger that held Him so securely would one day give way to the wood of the cross. May we too embrace Him with all of our love as did St. Francis.

December Prayer

An Islamic Prayer for Peace

*In the Name of Allah,
the beneficent, the merciful:
Praise be to the Lord of the
Universe who has created us and
made us into tribes and nations
that we may know each other,
not that we may despise each other.
If the enemy incline towards peace,
do thou also incline towards peace, and
trust in God, for the Lord is one that
hears and knows all things.
And the servants of God Most Gracious
are those who walk on
the Earth in humility, and when we
address them, we say, "Peace."
— U.N. Day of Prayer for World Peace 2*

What does the word “Epiphany” mean?

Divine manifestation: The Epiphany takes its name from the Greek epiphania, which denotes the visit of a god to earth. The feast unites three events in the life of Christ when His divinity, as it were, shines through His humanity: the adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan: and the the first miracle at the wedding feast of Cana.

Gift of Gold for Royalty

Gift of Incense for Divinity

Gift of Myrrh for Salvation Work

Meditation on “Epiphany” - based on St Bonaventure - From “A Sense of The Divine”

“Now we are come to The Adoration of The Magi” The powers of the soul. (memory, understanding, and will), are rightly described as, Kings, because now they rule the flesh, have dominion over the senses, and are taken up entirely, as is fitting, with the pursuit of divine things. They seek The Child through meditation, go in search of Him in prayerful reflections : „Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East.? We have seen his Splendour shining in the devout mind; we have seen his Radiance lighting up the inner recesses of the soul. We have heard his Voice and it is soft and tender; we have tasted his Sweetness and it is delightful; we have caught his Fragrance and it is alluring; we have felt his Embrace and it is irresistible. Now, Herod, give us the answer, tell us where The Belovéd is to be found, show us the Little Child we are yearning to see. He is the One we seek and long for. He is found in, Bethlehem of Judah, [the House of Bread]. He is found in Judah,[in The one who praises].” Find Him in The Eucharist and in Devotion, and in Praise. There He finds us, too, and sends us on His mission. ((VIII : 147f))



Back: Jayne, Asta, Anne, David, George, Barry, Cathy, Sandra, Daryl, Ken, Sally.
Front: Jenny, Maxine, Sandie, Ted, Rae, Kath, Anna-Maria, Pearl, June, Barb

A Convocation of Eagles - Weekend October 10-12, 2014

By: Rev Sally Buckley tssf

Was held at the St John of God Retreat House, Shoalwater Bay. Our theme was a “Convocation of Eagles”.
“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles” Isaiah 40: 31

What a joy it was to attend our recent Convocation. The Convocation was great, thank you for all the hard work in organising the programme. I sadly arrived a little late, due to a funeral, and bad traffic between the airport to the Retreat House, and so missed much of Sandra’s opening talk about ‘sharing peace and joy amongst believers and non-believers’, but really enjoyed what I did hear.

Saturday morning Evan shared some of his passion for Anglican EcoCare and encouraged us to consider joining this unique organisation within the Perth Diocese - something very complementary to the Franciscan charism.

On Saturday afternoon we welcomed some visitors, including Archbishop Roger Herft as he launched Ted’s new Advent devotional, Jesus the Child we Worship.

Sunday worship was highlighted by the Profession of Jayne Hughes and Jenny Simons, along with our Renewals and a great sermon from Ted.

Then Sandie shared with us the background of how we came to our theme for the weekend, along with a delightful African story, “Fly Eagle Fly”. For those with internet, you can find a study on this at <http://www.oursaviourap.org.au/files/Dying-and-Rising-Study-29-4-12.pdf>

I finish in the Parish at the end of this year so am looking forward to having time to devote more time to the Order.

With my love and prayers,



Learning to Gaze: Poverty and Prayer

- Clare of Assisi

“The First Letter to Agnes of Prague”

From: “Franciscan Prayer”

By: Ilia Delio, OSF

When you have loved (Him), you are chaste,
When you have touched (Him), You become more pure,
When you have accepted (Him), You are a virgin.

Whose power is stronger,
Whose generosity more abundant,
Whose appearance more beautiful,
Whose love more tender,
Whose courtesy more gracious.

What a great and praiseworthy exchange,
To leave the things of time for those of eternity,
To choose the things of heaven for the goods of earth,
To receive the hundred-fold in place of one,
And to possess a blessed eternal life.

“Being a Deacon and Franciscan in the World Today!”

By: Rev Diana Ware tssf

St Francis was a Deacon and of course, Franciscan. The role of Deacon and being a follower of St Francis is integrated into my whole being. Living the Gospel as both Franciscan and Diaconal. They are “Both And”, interwoven, one becoming the other.

Just as St Francis wandered beyond the walls of the First Order community, so do I, wander beyond the boundaries of Parish, Region and Diocese.

Whilst journeying towards Ordination in 1999, I also was on a parallel journey towards profession as a Tertiary in the Third Order, in 2000.

Ministry in the 90’s took me to the Mater Hospital, Brisbane, and the Brisbane Women’s Correctional Centre, Wacol, both in the Southern Region – St Martin’s Nursing Home, Taigum, Community Service supervision in Grovelly Parish, and the Prince Charles Hospital, Chermshire, Northern Region. I was ordained Deacon and licensed to Zillmere Parish. When we sold our home and moved to Jimboomba Parish, in 2002, I was invited to minister there, and the Prison Ministry continued, both in the Southern Region.

We took delivery of our mobile home in 2003, and prepared to head to the Western region, to a little outback town of Eulo, where we stayed at the outback car/park for one month and waited to see what would eventuate. Bishop Rob Nolan had suggested this and towards the end of the month, were invited to Homestead sit on a 62,000 acre property, 100 kilometers south of Cunnamulla, South west Queensland.

In May 2003, I had received “Permission to Officiate” license to Queensland’s far western town of Birdsville. This was to be at the invitation of the Parish Priest. The Homestead sitting continued for over 12 months as word of mouth spread.

In 2005 we traveled to Western Australia for 12 months. Ministry in some small towns were being the “hospitality” visiting and listening to clergy and people. We were to meet up with TSSF tertiaries and novices whilst in Freemantle, Albany, Esperance. Then, when we returned in 2006, we spent a lot of time in North Queensland, worshipping at St. Peter’s West End, Townsville. The parishioners had been asking me for a couple of years if I would like a license. Then, in 2008 Bishop Bill Ray asked me and I agreed. We also caught up with TSSF tertiaries and novices, whilst in Townsville. – Putting names to faces.

My husband died in May 2009, after a 12 month journey with pancreatic cancer. So I was left with the mobile home. I lived in it for 12 months moving it to be beside me in a rental cottage at Glasshouse Mountains, on a plantation. I sold the mobile home in February, 2011 and bought a smaller motor home in August, enabling me to travel to Western and Northern Queensland., ministering at the outback town of Mitchell two or three times a year. Mitchell is situated between Roma and Charleville, in the western region. The town endured a mighty flood in 2012, which effected 85% of homes and businesses. My heart went out to these people and the Parish of Caloundra donated money and items of linen and clothing, which I took out in April and again in July. Finally, in 2014, I could say finally the town is back together with a wonderful new bridge over the Maranoa River. I still like to visit at least twice a year.

Earlier this year, 2014, I moved from Glasshouse Mountains to Caloundra where I feel I have come home. Our holiday home was now in Caloundra. When I was young, I loved this place on the Sunshine Coast, and I continue to do so. I worship, and minister in the Parish of Caloundra and Glasshouse Country. I visit Mitchell and Townsville whenever I am able.

The Diaconal and Franciscan way continues with the “going out and the coming in”.

Yours in Christ’s Love





From: Merrill Rubick

This prayer was sent to me by Merrill Ruback on my Prayer Day – Day 13

Also from Roselind Ruwoldt, this ‘Prayer for Peace’ which is rather relevant at this present time.

O Great Creator God,
I pray for the power to be gentle;
the strength to be forgiving;
the patience to be understanding;
and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what I believe to be right.
May I put my trust in the power of good to overcome evil
and the power of love to overcome hatred.
I pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world freed from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead people to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.
Help me to devote my whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which I and all people were created
I ask this in the name of your Son,
Our Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen

Mountain Retreat

By: Dawn Punter

We ascend to the mountain and leave behind – all the small things that make us so busy and detract from our peace of mind and spirit.

Looking down over the side of Mt Tamborine – even down there seems peaceful. The orderliness of the farms – so green and the many dams with their life giving water – all contribute to making the welcoming atmosphere. Behold there is a beautiful red hot air balloon floating along in the breeze.

Our speakers lift us to a higher place in our spiritual life. Patrick Oliver showed us the portals of Poverty, Humility and Charity, represented by the three upper points of the San Damiano Cross. Bishop Keith Slater once again using the San Damiano Cross led us with inspirational ideas about the well-known and loved Franciscan prayer.

Between Bishop Godfrey, Bronwyn and Glenys our time was well utilized, and organized, happily. The singing and the story reading were a bonus.

Remember St Francis and Our Lord Jesus had their times on the mountain whence came their spiritual renewal.

The Portal

By: Terry Gatfield

This is a special Franciscan retreat. Mount Tamborine, the Christian Convention Centre, set deep in the heart of rainforest of the Gold Coast Hinterland. Patrick Oliver, one of our speakers guides us into the world of portals. Portals for us to peek through where God reveals Himself. The world in pregnant with portals. Indeed the whole of creation is a giant portal.

I retire from his address and deposit myself on a rustic wooden bench. Silence flows and Nature's breath fills me. God bathes me in a rich pallet of greens. Though most have been identified and named, more than 1000 shades of greens have not been named. The eye sees thousands more. They are all here embellishing the wonders of other colours. A myriad of other colours. The eye of Renoir is needed to see the delightful and playful hues and tones. Visual music. Variety on variety. Wonder on wonders. Mystery on mystery.

My ornithological friends make a friendly visit. They bring a cacophony of song, a panorama of colour and movement - the wonders of the designer's delight. Variety on variety. Wonders on wonders, Mystery on mystery.

The wind shares its breath and carries the fragrance of the flowers, leaves and grasses. A constellation of differences. Variety on variety. Wonders on wonders. Mystery on mystery.

A couple of lovers meander by, arm in arm. So together. She a delicate shapely blond, tender pale skin tone and finely dressed. He muscular, rugged, dressed in denim with an Afro Caribbean complexion. So different but one. Arm in Arm. Variety on variety. Wonders on wonders. Mystery on mystery.

I sit and ponder our creator's passion for variety. Everything, absolutely everything, is different. The designer of snowflakes - with no two the same. Likewise God has made everyone different. No two are identical, neither voice, retina, fingerprint nor DNA. We are all absolutely unique - absolutely unique. God does not make people he only makes individuals.

Retreats are a wonderful opportunity to see the nature of God - His creation is a revelatory portal. As Christians, we don't have an exclusive. This is God's 'general revelation'. The apostle Paul speaks of this; "*God has made it plain - for since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature has been clearly seen in things that have been made*".

Let's consider spending more time at the portal of creation for every one has access to it - the just and the unjust. No wonder St Francis fell deeply in love with the wonders, beauty and magnificence of God's creation.



Christmas in a Broken Land

Advent 2013.

By: Rev Ted Witham W.A.

Those were the days when the heat's fitful haze turned the blue distant ranges to grey oceans, and the sun's morning light in spindling beacons bright shone yolk yellow and all was stilled motion.

The bricks held their heat, shamed by defeat they could no longer supply cool shelter; Children ran slow and heard a bleak crow caw listlessly over carrion with no one to tell it to celebrate the arrival of God's survival - a new child in the bush down under: not a plaster saint with blue robes faint, but a battler, a beauty, God's wonder.

Not a victory march through a triumphal arch, but a nail-biter, to get there God's struggling. In today's Australia, God appears a failure, but God hangs on, power in long-suffering.

Maybe that's why in the hot and the dry we remember as kids God's birthing; nothing fancy or fussy, just a cowed and mussy - God's total commitment to earthing.

Joy in the face of suffering

By: Gemma Le Mesurier

Joy is an important part of the Franciscan life, but it can be a difficult part to live, especially if we fall into the trap of thinking of joy as an emotion like sadness and anger. In our secular culture, joy is lumped in with the emotions because it is misunderstood once it is divorced from the concept of faith. Joy and faith go together, and so I dare to say that anyone who hasn't experienced faith of some kind won't have experienced joy.

If we think of joy as an emotion, it can feel like when we are not happy we are failing at living out our Franciscan calling. But suffering is a real part of life, and it can make happiness seem far away. It is at these times that it is most imperative that we discover the heart of joy.

Joy is not the opposite of sadness, anger, or suffering. It is functioning at another level entirely. Just as forgiveness is found in sin, life in death, and God in humanity, joy can be found in suffering. We can gain a more profound understanding of what forgiveness, life and joy truly are when their paradoxical nature is recognised.

Suffering can lead us to draw close to God, and in so doing to draw close to the joy only God can give. It is a joy that comes from hope - hope in a resurrection of your very own heart. It is a joy that comes from trust - trust that, in the words of Julian of Norwich, "all will be well, all will be well, and all manner of things will be well." It is a joy that comes from love - an abiding sense of being loved. It is a joy that comes from gratitude - a recognition and awareness of the gift-like nature of your life.

If you do not believe in something greater, there is no foundation for trust, and no reason for hope, no source of love, and no need for gratitude. These come from faith. And these things themselves are the stuff that joy is made from. We do not need to feel pressured to force joy from ourselves. It is a gift of our faith that God plants in our hearts, which upholds us, supports us, directs us and protects us.



October 2014 Retreat at The Monastery, Stroud

from left back ; Regional Minister Jill Gumbley, David Masters, Carol Hucker, Paul Hawker, Monica Dennison, Jane Noller, Angela Peverill, Pirriall Clift, John Marsh, John Blakemore Chris Garland, Tony Camenzuli, Faith Marsh, Denise McGowan-Slee, Ian Randall, Julie Blakemore., Wendy Brack is in front on the right, Elizabeth Corah [Professed during the Retreat] on the left

My First Silent Retreat

By: Carol Hucker

For the first time, this year, I attended the Silent Retreat with other tertiaries at The Monastery, at Stroud. I did not know what to expect, which in hindsight was a good thing. As is so often the way with God, I received what I can only describe as a spiritual surprise. On the first morning the retreat leader led us through an exercise of imagination. At one point we were to imagine Jesus sitting with us looking into our eyes and talking to us. I have to admit I am always a little sceptical at these exercises, however when I closed my eyes I saw the scene and Jesus looking right into the depths of my soul and looking at all of my secrets. Instead of feeling condemnation I felt an overwhelming sense of acceptance, so much so that I just started to cry.

The lessons that I learnt from the retreat are that silence confirms that presence of God. The acceptance of Jesus is more than the shame that I had. My prayer life has changed since the retreat, particularly in the area of intercessory prayer. I am still on a high from the retreat, but I am excited by silence.

Lord, you are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name...Jeremiah 14:9

By: John Blakemore

Eighteen in all, tertiaries from NSW A Region came together in community at the Old Monastery at Stroud to spend the weekend in silence and prayer, reflecting on the place that prayer holds in our lives. Guided by the monastery's resident priest, Pirriall Clift, we were encouraged to find in both means and meaning a way that we might fulfil the call of The First Way of Service: "to be constantly aware of God's presence so that we may indeed pray without ceasing". While we did pray together in the most familiar modes, saying and singing the offices and celebrating the Eucharist, it was the monastery itself, its buildings and its grounds that opened the means to finding new ways to pray without ceasing. Pirriall suggested we put away our books and turn outward to the whole of creation, to rest in the beauty of the natural world as God rests in our hearts.

The Old Monastery and the Hermitage of St Bernadine, home to our First Order Brothers in the Province of Divine Compassion, sit on the mid slope of rolling hill country an hour north of Newcastle, adjacent to the historic town of Stroud. Surrounded by farmland as well as native bush, the setting invites quiet contemplation of the wonderful gifts of God's creation.

The riotous joy of the frog chorus in the dams, beginning slowly and tentatively as the late afternoon slides toward evening and building to near deafening chorus before settling quietly back beneath the night sky. The surprised little wallaby staring back as approached on the bush track then gently exiting into the safety of a thicket. The long necked turtle slowly making a way across the wide grassy plot below the monastery, indifferent to the rabbits grazing about and the curious human bent over to get a better look at this wonderfully made up creation of God. The woodland ripe with new spring growth and the monastery gardens bright with colour. In past years, the presence of two unique symbols of our extraordinary native animals, a koala and an echidna have visited us on retreat (perhaps attracted by our silence?) If one were ever mystified about the means by which one might "pray without ceasing" then the answer is here in the invitation of the natural world to enter into the endless vibrations and heartbeat of the wind in the trees, the calls of the birds, the flight of small insects, the unseen source of the rustling in the dry leaves, the bright feather fallen from a bird's wing, for all this is the heartbeat of God, surrounding us and suffusing us with God's love and grace. It calls us to prayer with every breath. So we learn from this, through all our senses, that as we pray to God, God offers back this blessing through the prayer that abides in all life of the creation and that when we acknowledge and honour this gift, we are acknowledging ourselves as an indivisible part of this great whole.

Over/

As the psalmist wrote:

Where can I go then from your spirit?
where can I flee from your presence
If I climb to heaven, you are there
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea
Even there your hand will lead me
and your right hand hold me fast. Ps:139



My trip on the Ghan and Adelaide

By: Lex Nason

In early September, my good friend Richard and I travelled to Adelaide from Darwin on the Ghan Railway. On a beautiful spring Saturday afternoon, Colin and I did a great walking tour of the city.

vFrancis the Guide

Excerpts from “15 Days of Prayer with St Clare of Assisi”
By: Marie-France Becker (pages 47-48)

If the *Most High Heavenly Father, through his mercy and his grace*, enlightens the heart of Clare, Francis, by word and example, shows the way (TestCl 5, 24). He is the voice that announces the Way. Clare discerns, without hesitation, the very concrete route that he borrows to reveal to her, her personal way: *God saw fit to speak these words about our vocation and election* (Testcl 16).

Like a lamp on her road, the words of Francis profoundly engraved in her memory enlighten her own development, nourish her desire and uphold her momentum. Her heart never remains deaf when he exhorts her throughout her life to give birth to her vocation, *the greatest of all graces* (TestCq 2-4).



**A Lament for
Refugees Service
held at
St John’s Cathedral,
Brisbane**

On Tuesday 28th October, 2104

This article was one of the prayers said on “Kindling Hope”

By: Charles Ringma

‘I still have a dream that one day justice will roll down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.’

**In the tender compassion of our God
The dawn from on high will break upon us.**

The one ‘who loves is a participant in the being of God.’

**In the tender compassion of our God
The dawn from on high will break upon us**

‘We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for victims of our nation and for those it calls (an) enemy.’

**In the tender compassion of our God
The dawn from on high will break upon us**

‘Non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation with the good.’

**In the tender compassion of our God
The dawn from on high will break upon us**

‘Meet your physical force with soul force.’

(C Ringma, Let My People Go: with Martin Luther King. Jr.)

**Franciscan & Holy Days
To Note**

- September 17 STIGMATA OF FRANCIS
- October 3 Transitus
- October 4 FRANCIS OF ASSISI
- October 11 All Franciscan Saints
- November 1 All Souls day
- November 2 All Saints Day
- November 8 John Duns Scotus
- November 16 St Agnes of Assisi
- November 19 Elizabeth of Hungary
- November 23 Fr Algy SSF
- December 1 Requiem for all departed Franciscans
- December 8 Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- December 25 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
- 2015
- February 18 Ash Wednesday
- April 3 Good Friday
- April 5 Easter Sunday

‘Readings and other material for worship and devotion are in the Manual - Section F’

Pilgrimage

By: Revd Miriam Nyrene

Inspired to write after the lovely offerings of the last province newsletter, I reflect upon a pilgrimage of sorts.

Last year in February, my husband Don was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. Shock was my first reaction followed by the gradual realisation that there was truth in our friend Aub's words, "Your world will contract now to the size of your illness, which will occupy so much of your time and emotional energy, almost as if the cancer is the only reality there is." Doctor's appointments, hospital visits, scans, waiting for results, procedures and recovery, injections, radiation, side effects and complications from the treatment of the cancer all take time and deplete our energy. This is unlikely to change. Sometimes, the present moment absorbs us, particularly when coping with or managing pain. Other times, we look ahead, making preparations for a time when Don will need more care or planning shared experiences not to be missed!

A pilgrimage means leaving behind the "comfortable familiar world of our day-to-day living" and entering "a place we do not know" (from "The Invitation to Pilgrimage", introduction to Alan Jones, *Journey into Christ*). In May this year, we made the physical journey to the birthplace of St Francis and St Clare. To be immersed in the beauty of Assisi has strengthened our Franciscan spirituality and our resolve to live our lives as simply and prayerfully as possible.

In the sacred place of St Leonard's, the worshipping centre for Anglicans in Assisi, Brother Daniel gave Don a blessing for hope, healing and acceptance of whatever will be. In the holiness of our own surroundings at home, we pray for these same things but the reality is that day to day we struggle to be hopeful, to stay present in the moment, to be calm, to turn difficulties to good and to trust that God is ever present.

Reverend Nicholas' reminder to slow ourselves down, that each day we inhabit the Holy Land encourages me to consider the holy ground of living with cancer. This manifests as many blessings – being the one to care, bathe, do up the sandals for my beloved; the developing richness with friends with whom we stay once a week during long periods of treatment; the unceasing prayers of our communities; and just today, a walk to celebrate across Muttonbird Island Nature Reserve (steep paths!) after months of less mobility for Don. "Today is the gift", we read in a mosaic on the rocks of the jetty wall.

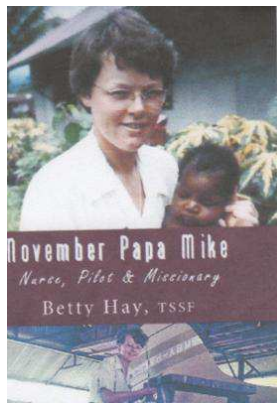
Many months after a diagnosis that has changed our lives, I find the courage to bring a spirit of pilgrimage to our journey, notwithstanding the pain and heartache. (The mystery of Christ is that the way is paved with both sorrow and joy!) I discover an ability to turn resentment to gratitude, to be more joyful, to look outwards with an open heart for a world of people who also journey with cancer.

Praying the lovely prayer of St Francis de Sales is bringing me peace and I find myself being in a place of uncertainty with more strength to face what comes.

BE AT PEACE

Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life; rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise, God, whose very own you are, will lead you safely through all things; and when you cannot stand it, God will carry you in His arms.

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow; the same understanding Father who cares for you today will take care of you then and every day. He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.



“November Papa Mike – Nurse, Pilot & Missionary”

By: Betty Hay,
Denmark, W.A.

Book Costs:

Paperback: \$25 each plus \$4.20 post and packing which totals \$29.20

Hardback: \$38 each plus \$14.07 post and packing which totals \$52.07

Contact:

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PO Box 304, Denmark, WA 6333
Tel: 08 9840 9775

From The Community Obedience

God, we give you thanks for the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis. Grant, we pray, that being knit together in community and prayer, we your servants may glorify your holy name after the example of Saint Francis, and win others to you love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Advent is a time of preparation through prayer and sacrifice, reflection and promise for the coming of Our Saviour's birth. It is also a time to think of those less fortunate than we are, and to find it in our hearts to be generous and kind to one another.

We welcome our new Provincial Minister, the Rt Rev Godfrey Fryar in his new term of office.

We also share our Faith journey, and this provides information on a Regionl, local and overseas level.

Your co-operation is proactive in providing communication to our wider community.

I thank each one of you for providing information/articles, and your support in your readiness to assist me, this year.

As 2014 is coming to a close, we will be preparing for our Lenten Journey - a time of observance of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline.

May the Spirit of Christmas bring you all peace, joy and many blessings.

Peace and all good,
Gloria