



# The Province of Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THAILAND & SRI LANKA

## NEWSLETTER

*A d v e n t*



*E d i t i o n*

Dear Franciscan Brothers and Sisters,

Advent starts with a reading from the prophet Isaiah chapter 2.1-5 where he speaks of a day that will come, when all nations shall stream to Jerusalem with open hearts, ready to learn the way of God and walk in his paths. It includes those wonderful words, where in speaking of the nations who have submitted to God's law, he pictures swords being made into ploughshares and spears transformed into pruning hooks.

My imagination led me to translate this into our context.

*Imagine that all the bombers that rain down death and destruction, destroying hospitals in Aleppo and killing children, were turned into passenger planes filled with joyful refugees, returning to their homes and lands.*

*Imagine that all the armoured vehicles were turned into tractors cultivating the soil and planting crops, and trucks loading the harvest for market.*

*Imagine that all the improvised explosive devices on roads and walking paths, that maim and kill, men, women and children at play, were turned into good explosives that would help build roads in the mountains to bring people together...*

Isaiah presents a vision of a transformed world order where peace and justice will prevail. This will however not come about through human effort alone, but through the commitment of people, whose hearts have been opened, to live according to the ways of God.

It is an Old Testament vision of the Kingdom of God that Jesus came to proclaim and inaugurate centuries later.

St Francis caught the vision, and opened his heart to live it in such a radical way that continues to astound and challenge people to this day.

Isaiah's vision cannot be forced upon the world, and its fulfilment is of course yet to come, at least in the fullest extent.

God's ways do not align with the hellish ways of ISIS, with their vision of perfection requiring complete crushing compliance.

The kingdom of God is a city of gentle ways that make people strong.

Just as Francis did, we as Franciscans in our own immediate environment can be instruments of the great vision of the Kingdom of God that is both here and yet to come ... a Kingdom where war and violence are revealed as primitive and outmoded ways of sorting out disagreements under the reign of the King of love.

Pace e bene,

samadanathodu vālamudan vallga. (Tamil),

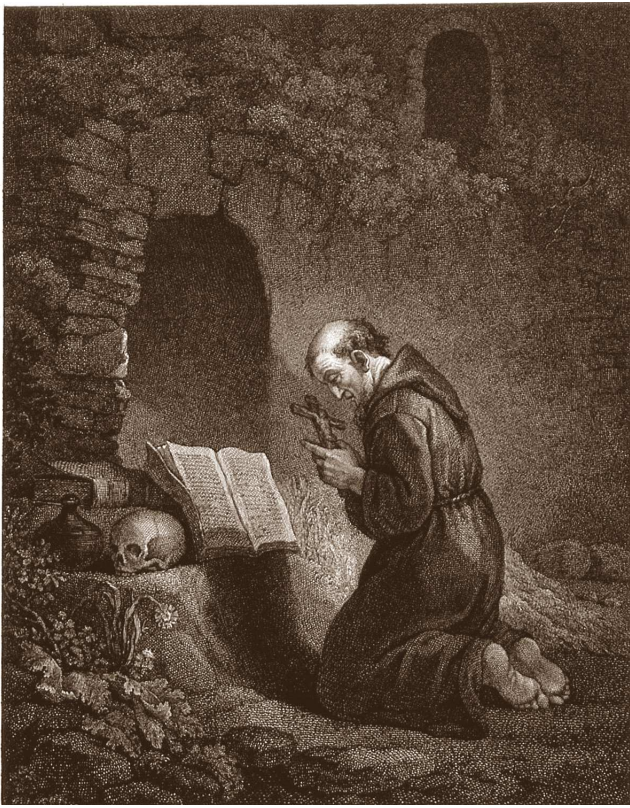
saamayath yaapathath veva (Sinhala),

平安与良善 (Mandarin)

+Godfrey tssf



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**A Tangible Saint**

Excerpts taken from: “The Lessons of St Francis – How to bring Simplicity and Spirituality into your Daily Life”

By: John Michael Talbot

Ours is a time of intense spiritual hunger. People are thirsting for the sacred, the mysterious, and the mystical. In a sense, this spiritual yearning has flowed like a river through human history.

Raised in wealth and luxury, Francis spent much of his youth seeking pleasure. But he turned his back on everything to embrace God, live a life of poverty, and serve lepers and the lowly.

Francis was empowered and inflamed with a burning love for God. Simply and profoundly, he took the words of Jesus to his heart, understood what they meant in his mind, and sought out ways he could practice them in his life. He did all of this in a wild and carefree way, not stopping to calculate how it might hurt his career or cramp his lifestyle.

The infectious, passionate, no-holds-barred faith of Francis soon ignited a movement of men and women who fanned out through Europe and the rest of the world. Though small of stature and plain in appearance, Francis has inspired hundreds of artistic masterpieces, including a renowned painting by Rembrandt. A devout Protestant who cared little for Catholicism. Rembrandt had a strong distaste for popery and the church’s practice of canonizing saints. But he lovingly painted Francis, kneeling in front of an open Bible and clutching a crucifix to his chest, thus showing how this humble believer speaks to all who follow Christ, regardless of denominational affiliation.

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*O how beautiful, how splendid, how gracious did he appear in the innocence of his life, in the simplicity of his words, in the purity of his heart, in his love for God, in his fraternal charity, in his ardent obedience, in his peaceful submission, in his angelic countenance! – Thomas of Celano*

**Sharing Our Gifts**

Excerpt from: “Advent & Christmas Wisdom from St Francis of Assisi”

Compiled by John V. Kruse

Let us, therefore, have charity and humility and give alms because it washes the stains of sins from our souls. For, although people lose everything they leave behind in this world, they, nevertheless, carry with them the rewards of charity and the alms they have given for which they will receive a reward and a fitting repayment from the Lord.

*St. Francis of Assisi, “later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance” 47*

**Sharing Outside of our Comfort Zones**

*He (Jesus) sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury.*

*Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”*

Mark 12:41-44

**Prayer**

Lord our society often seems to be abounding in excess. So much money is spent on what people **want**, while so many people are in **need**. May I be mindful of those who lack basic necessities. Stir in me the needed motivation to contribute to their well being, not just out of my excess, but in a way that requires a sacrifice and that reflects all that you have given me.

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**In the Midst of Our Dark World**

Excerpt taken from: “Advent and Christmas Wisdom” Liguori Publications

By: Henri Nouwen

I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God’s saving power...Our temptation is to be distracted by them...When I have no eyes for the small signs of God’s presence—the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends—I will always remain tempted to despair. The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, he asks for my full attention. The work of our salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises.

**HIDDEN HOPE** - A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:1-3

**PRAYER** - We welcome you, small child of Bethlehem, whose coming we await with quiet attention. Shield us from the shouts, the screams, the empty promises of the season, and encourage us to turn our hopes to your coming. We know that the promise is hidden in the stable in Bethlehem and rooted in the offspring of Jesse; let us look for our salvation there. Amen.

**ADVENT ACTION** - Today I will look for one small sign that God is present in my daily life. I will give thanks for his presence. If he is absent, I will resolve to find out why.

ST. FRANCIS' DEVOTION TO THE BABY JESUS

Taken from: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/getfed/story-francis-assisi-first-navity-scene/>

ST. BONAVENTURE TELLS THE STORY -

St. Bonaventure (1221 – 1274), a follower and contemporary of St. Francis, has given us a complete account of the night of the first live nativity scene:

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.

What a beautiful scene! Each time we meet at our churches for a nativity pageant or live nativity scene, or around a nativity decoration for a time of prayer, we are participating in a centuries-old Catholic tradition.

St. Bonaventure goes on to talk about St. Francis of Assisi's personal devotion to the Baby Jesus that sparked this event:

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.

The first nativity scene is also associated with an apparition of the Baby Jesus to those gathered with St. Francis. This must have been Jesus' way of giving his blessing to the nativity scene, which was a novelty in its time and had never been done before. Again, St. Bonaventure continues the story.

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.

St. Francis' recreation of that first Christmas night was so popular that soon every church in Italy had its own nativity scene. The devotion spread to private homes and in modern times even to secular institutions, so much so that it's impossible to imagine Christmas without a nativity scene.

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**Reflection 3,  
environment, justice and peace**

**A scripture**

By: Helen Young, tssf,  
The Province of the Pacific...



Matthew 6: 24 - 29

Jesus noticed, paused, delighted in the beauty of creation and saw the wisdom of the Creator, was reminded of God's artistry and attention to detail. So did Francis. Do we?

In noticing, are we prompted to accept our part, our stewardship, our cherishing of the earth?

Does our response lead us to preserving, to sharing?

**A story**

Sometimes Francis went to the little villages around Assisi to preach to the people and he often took one of the younger brothers with him. Come on he said one day to one of them "let's go and preach to the people". When they came to the village square Francis greeted the people who gathered around him and the young friar. They spoke to him and he talked and joked with them for some time. Then Francis said to the young brother, "come on, we must be on our way" But the brother was astonished and said, "but we haven't yet preached to the people". Yes we have replied Francis, "if they did not see our Blessed Lord in our lives, they will certainly not see him in our words. We are always preaching, we don't always have to do it in words".

**A prayer**

God, as I open my eyes to the world today, please open my eyes to what you want me to do in it today. Amen

## Francis and the Five Pillars -

By: Revd Ted Witham tssf  
Taken from: W/A Pentecost N/L 2015

Ted's question was not 'What did St Francis learn from his encounter with the Sultan', but 'What can we Franciscans learn from Islam, in particular, the Five Pillars of Islam'? What follows is taken from Ted's notes, which he has most generously allowed me to use.

**Shahadah:** There is no god but God.

Seek God - Matthew 6:33 - "Strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

The Franciscan Motto: My God, and all things.

The Lady Poverty was Francis' own poetic principle - *liberty*. Poverty freed him from the cult of self; his spirit could then wing its flight to God. Possessing God he felt rich indeed.

**Salat:** Prayer five times a day.

We are called to "Prayer without ceasing" (1Thess. 5:17).

Pray where you are. Spread your prayer mat in the desert and direct your heart to God.

Constant awareness. This world is a gateway to the wider world. Many indigenous faiths have thin places ... but for Franciscans, all places are thin!

**Zakat:** Annual money giving.

What? Traditionally 2.5% of total wealth is given, excludes *nisab* - the minimum amount to live on, and often excludes the family home.

Why? Tithes is based on *income*. Retirees, and others in the Third Order, no longer have traditional income but we all have *wealth*. Wealth may be a more appropriate basis for our giving than income. *We are among the wealthiest people in the world!*

The ethical use of money

- Ethical banking - Islamic banks put service and security over profit. Do we withdraw our money from banks that invest in arms or coal, or do we use our power as customers to demand better of our banks?

Richard Rohr OFM writes of soft prophecy and hard prophecy - 'soft prophecy' which is shown through living lives which are loving, as opposed to 'hard prophecy' which is shouting in the market place what is wrong.

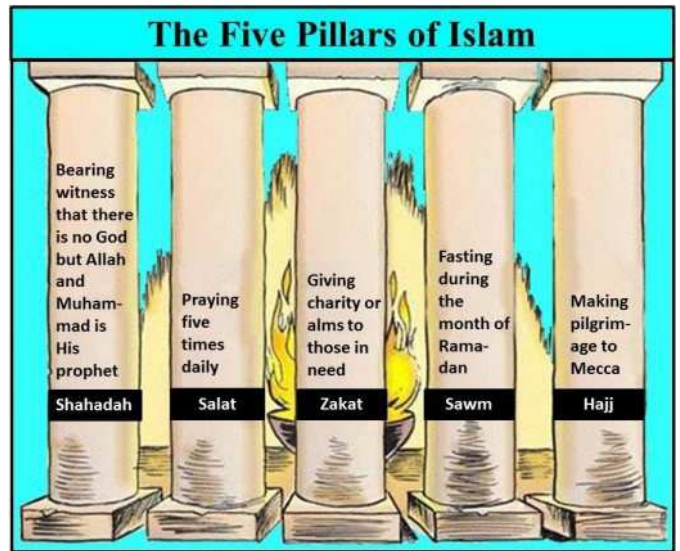
Micro-financing charities - offering tiny loans to poor men and women to start small businesses, purchase of a goat, sewing machine or solar panel etc.

Grameen Bank received a Nobel Prize.

**Sawm:** Fast - from fasting?

They should fast from the feast of All Saints until Christmas. Those who voluntarily fast at Quadragesima, those forty days after Epiphany which the Lord consecrated with his own holy fasting, will themselves be blessed by the Lord; yet they are not required to do so if they do not want to. They must fast during Lent, but they are not required to do so at other times except on Fridays. In case of obvious necessity, however, they are excused from bodily fasting.

I counsel, admonish and beg my brothers that, when they travel about the world, they should not be quarrelsome, dispute with words, or criticize others, but rather should be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to all as is fitting. They must not ride on horseback unless forced to do so by obvious necessity or illness. Whatever house they enter, they are first to say, "Peace to this house" (Lk. 10:5). According



to the holy gospel they can eat whatever food is set before them. St Francis of Assisi - Rule of Life III

The Brothers were not required to fast if they did not want to, but they were blessed if they did.

The fasting to be concerned about: at all times to 'fast' from disputes and quarrels, and from riding horses (for Tertiaries in our day - luxury cars? flying Business Class?).

While Francis was away meeting the Sultan, he heard that Brother Elias had added extra fasting days. He hated the idea because it would mean more time within the walls of the friary rather than out on the road. It meant less joy and fun at meals. It meant a more restrictive spirit within the Order.

**Hajj:** Pilgrims and visitors

Freely become 'pilgrims and visitors' in the world. St Francis, Legend of Perugia quoting 1 Peter :1.

Freedom that comes from living simply and not trying to own part of this world.

Pilgrimage is getting off the couch and going out to love those whom we meet on the way. Pilgrimages brings stories of faith from particular places.

Ted left us with questions to reflect upon:

† 'Love God, and do what you want.' What do you think Augustine meant by this?

† What changes do you need to make to take your faith on the road?

† Richard Rohr's idea of 'soft' and 'hard' prophecy. Do you agree 'soft' prophecy is more in keeping with our Franciscan spirit? When do we need to shout in the market square what is wrong?

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**Luke 2:10,11**

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*



## Always Remember Your Beginning

Excerpt taken from: "15 Days of Prayer with St Clare of Assisi"

By: Marie-France Becker

Writing to her friend, Agnes, Clare urges her to remember her first call: it contains the light to illumine the road on which to travel and the breath to strengthen her momentum. To look again at her history rejoins the fundamental attitude of all prayer by which, peacefully, under the gaze of God, we gather a living spray of the founding events of our spiritual experience and the creative words of the Lord which orient our existence from the beginning.

The place of memory offers an invigorating pause where the powers of the heart give impetus to desire. Always remember .... Clare does not invite us to a nostalgic withdrawal into the past of our initial encounter with the Lord. It is a question of drawing forth a new momentum in our journey toward him. The beginning is before us and creates a call.

Always remembering the marvels of God in our lives is the best manner of placing, ourselves in the presence of his love offered today because it is given forever. It is him who calls us to live in covenant and it is, also, him who gives a good beginning, may give the increase and may also give final perseverance (Test Cl 78).

*Christ is the radiance of eternal glory  
He is the brightness of eternal light and the mirror without blemish.  
Gaze upon that mirror each day, O Queen and spouse of Jesus Christ,  
And continually study your face in it,  
That you may adorn yourself completely,  
Within and without,  
Covered and arrayed in needlework and similarly adorned  
With the flowers and garments of all the virtues, as is becoming,  
The daughter and dearest bride of the Most High King.  
Indeed, in that mirror, blessed poverty, holy humility and inexpressible charity  
Shine forth as with the grace of God,  
You will be able to contemplate them throughout the entire mirror.  
Look, I say, at the border of this mirror.  
That is, the poverty of Him  
Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes.  
O marvelous humility! O astonishing poverty!  
The Kind of angels, The Lord of heaven and earth,  
Is laid in a manger! (4LAg 14-21)*

## Elly - My Greyhound

By: Chris Winkett

Having said goodbye to a much beloved dog, we lasted five weeks in a dogfree house, a much cleaner house, but oh so soulless. We adopted a rescue greyhound, Elly, a delight. She has raced and was 'good in the breeding barn,' as her kennel owner said, which probably meant many litters of puppies. She has certainly earned her retirement.

Elly is a large and beautiful animal, black, soft, shiny. When I look at her, I think of the great Creator, who created such beauty. She is a hospitable dog in the Franciscan tradition, stopping on her walks to greet all passersby. At the side of my bed at night, she is a large black sentinel. In her dreams she reruns the Australian Cup at the Meadows, legs twitching rhythmically. Elly is presence. She lies beside me when I am sitting with a directee in spiritual direction. I think often that she is the better director, because she never speaks out of turn. Elly reminds me of the unseen Presence who accompanies me and loves me unbidden and often ignored.

For us Elly is a gift from God. She reflects the patience of God. If I go near her lead she is up like a shot, tail wagging in excitement, eyes hopeful. But if I walk past, she sighs and seems to say, 'I'd love to go for a walk but that's all right I'll wait until you are ready,' and she lies down. If she should be hungry, there's no impatient whining, no barking, for greyhounds rarely bark, she merely lies down near her bowl.

In this waiting season of Advent, inspired by Elly's patience, I am moved to wait patiently. When the never ending violence and parade of leaders, who do not serve the common good, depress me and I think 'How long O Lord, how long?' I am reminded not to despair, but to wait, to live faithfully day by day, as Francis and Clare did in times no less violent than ours. I am reminded to wait patiently on the God, who in turn waits for me.

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### Appointment - Locum Bishop

Taken from:  
Wednesday Weekly News for the Anglican Southern Queensland Community – 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2016

The Right Reverend Godfrey Fryar, former Bishop of Rockhampton, will act as locum Bishop for the Northern Region from 24<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and into the early part of 2017.

Please pray for Bishop Godfrey as he begins his pastoral ministry in the Northern Region.

## FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH

By: Michelle Blondel

For the past 3 years I have driven to Broome for the winter. I have Multiple Sclerosis and was finding the cold of winter rather difficult. My MS had been stable for over 10 years and I wanted to go north. Previously a friend and I had done a lot of travelling throughout Outback Australia in a motor home. This I had to give up after being left with a right side deficit following one of my MS episodes.

I decided that I wanted to drive by myself to Broome. On my first trip I looked on this as a type of pilgrimage. I was able to book suitable accommodation for each step of the way. As the route was all main highways I could use Cruise Control on my car and stop every hour.

Many of my friends were very concerned about this escapade. However, having prayed about it – I could see no reason why I should not at least attempt it. I could pull out at any time. I had great confidence that if I did have a flat tyre or any other mechanical issue a friendly truckie or fellow traveler would lend a hand. So, off I set. My friends, including my Sydney Franciscan group, were very faithful in praying for me on my journeys. Yes, I travelled safely on all trips with no car issues and managed to avoid the kangaroos, emus, eagles etc, that crossed the road in front of me. Although it was good to see them in the wild!!

I had audio books to keep me company. In addition first thing every morning I played that wonderful hymn – For the beauty of the earth. I sang along as I drove and played it over several times whilst driving through the most wonderful diverse countryside. This included wide open spaces, red hills and escarpments, along rivers, wattle lined highways, the wonderful Boab trees of the Kimberleys and just so much more. All the creation of our wonderful God.

This year – just by coincidence – we sang this same hymn at church on the Sunday I left. What a special blessing that was to ‘send me on my way’.

For the beauty of the earth  
For the beauty of the skies  
For the love which from our birth  
Over and around us lies:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our sacrifice of praise



For the beauty of each hour,  
Of the day and of the night  
Hill and vale, and tree and flowers  
Sun and moon and star of light  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our sacrifice of praise.

## Bonaventure – Patron Saint

[www.saintbonaventure.org](http://www.saintbonaventure.org) >

Born north of Rome in the year 1217, the one we know as Bonaventure was baptized Giovanni de Fidanza. Tradition tells us that he received the name Bonaventure (bona - “good”, venture - “event”) when as a child he was cured of a life threatening illness through the prayers of St. Francis of Assisi. Bonaventure entered the Franciscan Order in 1243. His precocious talent was immediately apparent, and he began to teach publicly in the Franciscan School at the University of Paris in 1248. Bonaventure’s academic tenure was brief, for in 1257 he was elected Minister General of an increasingly divided Franciscan Order.

Bonaventure, like St. Francis, had a love of nature and went on to say that it is through created things that God speaks to us and gives us a glimpse of himself. Bonaventure writes:

“Just as you see that a ray of light entering through a stained glass window is colored in different ways according to the different colors of the various parts, so the divine rays shine forth in every creature in different ways and in different properties.”

“Creatures are shadows, echoes and pictures of that first most perfect Principle.... They are vestiges, representations, spectacles proposed to us and signs divinely given so that we can see God.”

Bonaventure’s world is a world infused with the presence of God. His world is also infused with the presence of Christ, in whom we see most clearly our God present in the world.

Bonaventure was canonized a saint in 1482 by Pope Sixtus IV who wrote at that time, “Bonaventure was great in learning, but no less great in humility and holiness. His innocence and dove-like simplicity were such that Alexander of Hales, the renown doctor whose disciple Saint Bonaventure became, used to say that it seemed as though Adam had never sinned in him.” In 1588 Bonaventure was declared a Doctor of the Universal Church with title “Doctor Seraphicus” or “Angelic Teacher”. It is supposed that he was given this title because of his great depth of insight into spiritual things which he left as his legacy.

***The peace which you proclaim with words must dwell even more abundantly in your hearts. Do not provoke others to anger or give scandal. Rather, let your gentleness draw them to peace, goodness and concord. This is our vocation: to heal wounds, to bind what is broken, to bring home those who are lost.***  
***- St Francis***

# Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Pray for Unity



Posted on: October 6, 2016 2:24 PM  
[ACNS, by Gavin Drake]

Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby met this morning at the Vatican after yesterday's historic vespers service.

Pope Francis has this morning (Thursday) held a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Anglican Primate and bishops at the Vatican. The Pope told them that ecumenism was "never an impoverishment, but a richness" and he said that during the past 50-years of closer relationship between Anglicans and Catholics, "the certainty has deepened that what the Spirit has sown in the other yields a common harvest."

And he urged them: "Let us never grow tired of asking the Lord together and insistently for the gift of unity."

Addressing the Anglican leaders as "dear brothers and sisters in Christ", he described the gathering as "a beautiful sign of fraternity".

And he described the historic meeting 50 years ago between Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey – the first public meeting between a Pope and an Archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation – as producing "many fruits."

"We need think only of the opening of the Anglican Centre in Rome, the appointment of the Archbishop's permanent representative to the Holy See, and the start of our theological dialogue, [Arcic]," he said. "In sharing together these fruits, we remember that they come from a tree which has its roots in that meeting of fifty years ago."

He said: "There is a time for everything, and now is the time in which the Lord challenges us, in a particular way, to go out from ourselves and our own environs, in order to bring his merciful love to a world thirsting for peace."

"Let us help one another to keep at the centre the demands of the Gospel and to spend ourselves concretely in this mission."

In response, Archbishop Justin Welby thanked Pope Francis for his leadership and example to the world and the Anglican Communion, and said that his letters and encyclicals "have spoken far beyond Rome and her church, in a manner which is universal."

After listing a range of serious issues facing the world, including war, migration, climate change and religiously motivated violence, Archbishop Welby said: "Facing all these perils, and a million more, is the body of Christ, the church, against which, as was promised to St Peter, the gates of hell shall not prevail."

"We have much cause for concern, **but** none for fear, for we are embraced by Christ, our Good Shepherd. In fact, we are filled with joy and hope, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who is given to us."

## Aegina Greece 2015

By: Lizzie

I am very quiet with  
You today, not much to  
say.

It is so quiet here.

I am quiet in all I do in case someone should  
hear,

maybe why I am quiet with You!

I climbed up here, the door locked, maybe that  
too.

It matters not - the palm leaves have dried,  
they hang like corpses from the roof on rope.

It matters not - it is not what is seen, they are  
evergreen and there is excitement and coloured  
clothes and the horse half asleep in the field  
wears a crown.

The wind encircles me and the palm circles  
around,

we are dancing. No, not words, a dance.



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## The Principles (for Daily Reading) Day Twenty-Six – Love

**Therefore, we seek to love all those to whom we are bound by ties of family or friendship. Our love for them increases, as our love for Christ grows deeper. We have a special love and affection for members of the Third Order, praying for each other individually and seeking to grow in that love. We are on our guard against anything that might injure this love, and we seek reconciliation with those from whom we are estranged. We seek the same love for those with whom we have little natural affinity, for this kind of love is not a welling-up of emotion, but is a bond founded in our common union with Christ.**



# Honouring Our Elders: The Ven. John Gibson

**By: Leo and Glenys Wimmer**

It is a great privilege to write this appreciation of a much loved and dear Franciscan friend, John Gibson. Following Profession, we were Tertiaries “in isolation” for 15 years. Nine years ago, moving back to Canberra we were delighted to meet regularly with Tertiaries here. Shortly after our arrival John retired to Canberra from Riverina Diocese, having been a Professed Tertiary since 1986. He was warmly welcomed into fellowship and became an integral member of the TOSSF community . Over the ensuing years John’s enthusiasm for our Lord Jesus and St Francis has embraced and upheld us all, as he lives his life as a fine example of the aims and objects that we all hold dear in our hearts. Wherever there is a need of any kind John willingly, with shining smile and spirit filled eyes, steps up in love and brings great blessing.

As our Regional Minister (NSW B/ACT) John devoted much time and love in encouraging and meeting with Tertiaries across the Region. Numbers in the Region increased considerably over these years as John lived out his Franciscan vocation in humility, love and joy. This is reflected in the enriching, regular gatherings – many of which are held in John’s home, also hosted with his lovely wife, Narelle. We were delighted when John was appointed Provincial Chaplain, knowing the Province would benefit immensely from his unstinting efforts in serving in the Franciscan way of prayer, study and work wherever he is called. We have been unable to participate in local gatherings for some time, missing the community fellowship - however, John has faithfully and lovingly kept in touch, checking on us and visiting us. He has been an enriching inspiration for us on our Franciscan journeys, particularly through challenging times. We praise our God for John’s Franciscan witness!

## Assist Syrian Refugees

CWS (Christian World Service) has always depended on the generous support of churches that have welcomed refugees to the United States, both with their words and actions. Now, more than ever, there is a need for communities of faith to join together in exhibiting a radical and unwavering hospitality to refugees in need. These resources are dedicated to helping our partners, colleagues, and supporters educate and mobilize their congregations to this end.

**‘Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.’**

– Hebrews 13:2 (NRSV)

Contact [bcasey@cwsglobal.org](mailto:bcasey@cwsglobal.org)

or **Syrian Refugee Appeal -  
Donate to UN Refugee Agency**

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1. Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there’s doubt, true faith in you.

**Refrain:**

**O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.**

2. Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;  
and where there’s sadness, ever joy. [Refrain]

3. Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
in giving to all people, we receive,  
and in dying that we’re born to eternal life.  
[Refrain]

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***Poverty is to have nothing; And to  
desire nothing  
And to possess everything; In a  
spirit of freedom.***

By: Jacopone da Todi



FRANCISCAN PEACEMAKING: MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH THE WIDER CHRISTIAN TRADITION

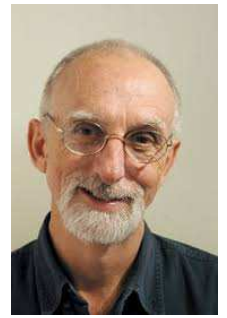
Excerpt taken from: <http://tssf.org.au/downloads>

By: Charles Ringma

**I. Introduction**

We are living in anxious and fearful times with the spectre of violence all around us and domestic violence within our own homes. The hope that World War II would be the last war to end all wars lies tattered and bloodied before us.

M. Ignatieff calls the 20th century “a century of total war”. 1 - and in this part of the 21st century we are traumatized by images of terrorism and war destroying whole cities and displacing millions. And Syria is only one place of conflict! As contemporary Christians we are pulled in three directions at the same time. On the one hand, we resonate with D. J. Hall’s assertion that “God is at work healing the creation, [and] making the tragic kingdoms of the earth a kingdom of peace.” 2 - He continues, this vision of God’s shalom is “not just the absence of hostilities, but a condition of well-being, justice, mutuality of concern, harmony between all creatures, [and] gratitude for being.” 3 - The second impulse, in contrast to this theological “idealism” is to accept with a good dosage of fatalism the violence that continues in our world and which can only be met with stronger violence. In the light of this, mainstream Christianity has always maintained the so-called just-war theory as the “dominant theological position.” 4 - The core idea here is to kill in order to create peace. 5 - or in the words of M. E. Jegen: “the world still depends on war to put an end to war.” 6 - This is pragmatism at its very best. The third move, is not simply to hold the first position and to reject the second, but to live the first option in following Christ and embracing the suffering that it will bring. Not only do many who work for peace and justice “experience emotional and mental fatigue,” 7 - but both Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. lost their lives in the cause of peacemaking. With the renunciation of violence a new relationship between opposing forces and adversaries becomes possible with the aim of the “reconciliation of the oppressor and not only the liberation of the oppressed.” 8 - With the intent of further exploring this third option, my purpose is to engage the Franciscan tradition. 9 - But I do so with a particular concern and from a particular perspective. My concern is that St. Francis and his tradition can so easily be seen as being so “out there,” so different, and therefore so undoable that we dismiss it even before we start the process of careful listening. And so we leave St. Francis with birds on his shoulders, stroking a wolf, and singing of brother sun and sister moon! 10



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**Saint Francis of Assisi - The Holy Poet**

Taken from: Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular [www.franciscanstor.org](http://www.franciscanstor.org)



Song, music, and poetry were so deeply a part of the nature of Saint Francis that in times of sorrow and sickness as well as of joy and good health he spontaneously gave voice in song to his feelings, his inspirations, and his prayers. The clearest expression of this aspect of the personality of the Poverello is the Canticle of Brother Sun. G. K. Chesterton, in his reflections on the saint, wrote of this work: “It is a supremely characteristic work and much of Saint Francis could be reconstructed from that work alone. “ And Eloi Leclercq, O.F.M., has written: “The manner in which Francis here looks at the created world is a key to his inner self, for the Canticle undoubtedly has elements that reveal in a special way the personality of its author. “

The Canticle of Brother Sun is a piece of spiritual literature that comes at a transition period in the development of language, that is, when Latin was slowly becoming Italian. For this reason, philologists and literary scholars as well as students of spiritual theology have studied this work. In the twentieth century more than five hundred articles have examined the Canticle and within the past twenty years ten books have been written about it.

The Legend of Perugia, 43, narrates the circumstances of the composition of the first section of the Canticle, in which the saint invites all creation to praise its Creator. The author describes the intense suffering of the Poverello in that period after he had received the stigmata. “For his praise,” he said, “I wish to compose a new hymn about the Lord’s creatures, of which we make daily use, without which we cannot live, and with which the human race greatly offends its Creator.” The second section of the Canticle, consisting of two verses concerning pardon and peace, was composed a short time afterward in an attempt to unite the quarrelling civil and religious authorities of Assisi. The same Legend of Perugia, 44, describes the reconciling power the Canticle had in the resolution of the conflict. The final verses of the work, which constitute the third section, were written at the death of Saint Francis. Once again the Legend of Perugia, 100, provides the details of the scene at the Portiuncula where the Seraphic Father enthusiastically sang the praises of Sister Death and welcomed her embrace.

This magnificent hymn expresses the mystical vision of the Saint of Assisi and, since it springs from the depths of his soul, provides us with many insights into the profundity of his life of faith in the Triune God, Who so deeply enters into creation. In this vision, however, the Little Poor Man does not lose himself in space or in the vastness of the created world. He becomes so intimate and familiar with the wonders of creation that he embraces them as “Brother” and “Sister,” that is, members of one family. More than any other aspect of the Canticle, this unique feature has enhanced the spiritual tradition of Christian spirituality.

## IN GOD'S IMAGE: RECONCILIATION THROUGH THE CROSS

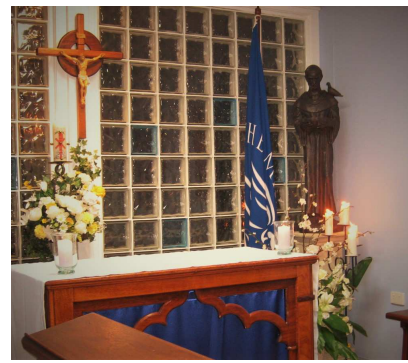
By: Reverend Mark Walker

Keeping up with current theological thought often seems like 'there is nothing new under the sun' (Eccl 1.9). Notwithstanding, there are some brilliant and inspiring modern theologians – Alister McGrath, especially his ongoing apology against *The Dawkins Delusion*; John Goldingay opening-up the Old Testament *for Everyone*; and John Pritchard and Paula Gooder, who have both transformed difficult, age-old concepts into modern language. All these writers have contributed to SPCK's excellent series *A little book of guidance*, providing mini-dogmatic booklets on such things as: *Where on Earth is Heaven?* *What do we mean by God?* *Why Read the Bible?*

As it happens, the latter, written by Tom Wright, is the author that has caused me to stop and consider what *is* new under the sun. Recently I received two of his current titles: *Advent for Everyone: A Journey through Matthew* and *The Day the Revolution Began: Rethinking the Meaning of Jesus' Crucifixion*. So of course, when asked to write something for Advent, I chose revolution and the crucifixion. Typical Franciscan! Tom Wright is one of those theologians that either writes *for Everyone* – his excellent commentary on the NT, for those who preach or listen to sermons regularly – or takes multiple books to tell you what Paul said (understandable, too). Yet, for whatever reason, *The Day the Revolution Began* really gets you thinking and is surprisingly easy to read. Suffice to say, I have not finished with it.

To summarise what Wright says sounds somewhat cliché: The Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the Bible. Doesn't sound revolutionary or new. However, that statement taken literally, exactly what Wright proposes, juxtaposed to the idea that Jesus' crucifixion was *not* so our sins may be forgiven, enabling our seat at the heavenly feast to come, *is* revolutionary. Yes, that's right; Wright says we are *not* going to heaven (let-alone "hell"). This message, in itself, is not new; I've often preached the good news of the resurrection to the new creation, a new heaven and a new earth. This Eden-re-creation language is found throughout scripture: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Mk 13.31); Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? (Lk 12.51); even, Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6.9-14). If what Wright suggests is true, the truth behind our faith *is* in accordance with the bible, then those redeemed by the Cross are those who will be resurrected to eternal life in the new creation here, on earth, not heaven.

Our part, it would seem, is faith in God and believing in Jesus, his Son. The residual pondering, it seems to me, is whether we are meant to demonstrate God's unconditional, unending love by reciprocating in kind, to one another, creation (the world, perhaps even the universe), and ourselves. If so, what does this reciprocation of love and reconciliation look like? Again, in accordance with the bible, if we are made in the image of God and are meant to be a light to the nations (Israel and now God's wider people), how are God's image-bearers meant to act? Somehow I see this as a wonderful Christmas thought / message!



The  
Mission Chapel  
of St Nicholas,  
Townsville

## “A Way of the Cross”

By: Graham Miller

“ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.”

A Way of the Cross... St Francis has shown me though my personal faith journey, that each one of us has our own 'way of the cross'. His particular 'way' remains for me the ideal, through his directness, his love and his tremendous faith in Christ.

His stories, poetry, actions and love for all Creation, which he embodied, attracted me from my teenage years.

My first experience of Franciscan life was at Brookfield Friary in the 1960's, in the early days of the SSF in the Diocese of Brisbane. Communal life, the daily Offices and the inclusiveness of the Brothers, created in me a sense of timelessness and peace. As a young person, it was easy to embrace the simplicity of the lifestyle. I particularly appreciated the friendship and scholarship of Illyd, with whom I have remained friends.

Work and life took over, but in the mid 1980's I made a pilgrimage to Assisi to climb the cobbled streets and to attend Mass in the burial chapel of Saint Francis. The experience of walking up to Assisi from the train station stripped away the centuries.

I had two wonderful experiences. First, visiting 'the site' of Francis' family home, where an aged French OFM showed me through the building. Even though he had no English, and I no French; I understood everything he described as I visited there.

Then I visited the Church of St Clare to experience the spirituality of the San Damiano crucifix. I was also attracted to the frescoes in the church, and one of the sisters watched as I explored the paintings in the gloom. She showed me the light switches behind the small altars, enabling me to spend time reading the artwork of Clare's life.

After such influences, Francis made his way into my spiritual life as my guide to the Way...and just as he found his life in simplicity, I was invited to find my own way in Franciscan life after being introduced to the local tssf community in Townsville in 2008.

Professed in 2010, I have the joy and privilege to serve Christ through the work of The Mission to Seafarers at the Port of Townsville; where our tssf community regularly meet to give thanks to God for Francis, and where Christ's Gospel of hospitality and love is shared among our international seafarers.

# Christmas is just around the corner

By: Reverend Pirrial Clift

That great feast celebrating the Incarnation of our God in Jesus: the wonder of God-with-us which is the essence of Franciscan spirituality. In a spreading atmosphere of Godlessness we are called to make this fact known. Easier said than done, trying to herald the coming of the great King in such a way that one's voice can be heard in tinsel town; or above the din of endless 'Christmas' parties.

How can the little ears of children hear the story of God's unconditional love when adults turn a deaf ear to the very notion of God's existence? Many don't recognise a need for God at all. The voice of consumerism is clamorous; commanding; beguiling; pervasive. This deceptive voice insists that human beings are self-sufficient, and can obtain every requisite for a fulfilling life via the credit card. God is neither with-us nor distant; God is nonsense.

The myth of self-sufficiency and the dazzle of riches was equally as beguiling in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when St Francis was preaching the Gospel of the Poor Christ. The Church had a bad reputation then - as now. Many were held in the faith only by fear of God's eternal wrath; many suffered spiritual despair, believing that eternal purgatory was their unavoidable lot as poverty prevented them buying their way out.

At Greccio in 1223 Francis told the ancient Nativity story in a cave on the hillside, the cold winter's night aglow with candles and lanterns, the people huddled together for warmth amongst the farm animals and an empty, rough-hewn manger, as the ever-new story of Jesus' birth was read. Witnesses claimed they observed a sleeping infant in the crib, and saw St. Francis take the child in his arms, rousing him from sleep. For his biographer Celano, this vision aptly symbolized the mission of the saint: "... for the Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of his grace, he was brought to life again though his servant St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory." The account of the Babe of Bethlehem coming to life in Francis' arms has delighted the spiritual imagination ever since. Amongst ordinary people for perhaps the first time, Jesus was perceived to be within reach, to be with-us. Lives were changed, hearts transformed and faith revitalised in the Umbrian hills that night. <sup>1</sup>

How are we to open *our* neighbours eyes to see Jesus alive? The Nativity play has become a cliché now relegated to the nursery for the entertainment of doting families videoing their children's performances

What can we do? St Francis wrote, in *The Earlier Exhortation* 'We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Cor 6:20) through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience; and give birth to him through our holy manner of living.' Mt 5:16).

Tertiaries are striving to reveal the beauty of Jesus Christ by carrying the Babe of Bethlehem within, and giving birth to him in our own small circles of influence... It all began with God, whose unstoppable desire was to reach out to humanity in the Word made flesh, and make visible the dynamic outpouring of divine love that forgives, heals, and saves humanity from the fear of death and the power of evil.

Mary of Bethlehem was an ordinary girl who was stopped in her tracks by an angel. Looking at her story we see that hearing the angel's message was not enough on its own, to bring Christ into the world; Mary had first to give her 'yes' with her whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, then to be open to being filled to overflowing with God's grace. We pray, then, for the courage to emulate that wholehearted 'yes'. We pray for the whole Order that "by the working of his [God's] grace, he was brought to life again though his servant St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory."

May God's desire come to fruition in us in the continuing outpouring of love which is the Incarnation, the very essence of Franciscan spirituality.

## (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> I have read that in the UK last year there were adult performances of the Nativity attended and enjoyed by secular audiences, but have not located a reference.

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## Cathedrals: places of sanctuary and growth

Excerpt from: Sth Queensland Focus Magazine, Page 3,  
October/November, 2016



Twenty Deans of the Australian Anglican Church have met at St James' Cathedral in Townsville, North Queensland, during an annual conference.

During their time together, the Deans shared in daily worship and prayer, listening to Scripture and joining in fellowship.

Many Deans highlighted the positive impact on their Cathedrals and cities of their active advocacy to fully welcome refugees and provide a place of sanctuary for asylum seekers. The Senior Australian Anglican Dean, Peter Catt (Brisbane), explained: "We reflect on the capacity of Cathedrals to lead social change, and on the cost of embracing such opportunities. Anglican Cathedrals were leaders in the sanctuary and "let them stay" campaigns, which prevented the deportation of almost 300 asylum seekers.

"As a result of this important advocacy, people from many backgrounds found a common ground with the Christian message of welcome, which led to a positive change in public opinion".

The College of Deans valued the opportunity to meet together in a spirit of unity and generous collegiality. They appreciated the change to learn from one another's experience, insights and wisdom, noting shared challenges and celebrating one another's milestones and achievements. Through their reports and in wider discussion, they considered the following areas:

- 1 Promoting the good news among enquirers, migrants and others who find their way into Cathedrals, and through the civic ministry of Cathedral churches
- 2 Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, including fostering of relationships and opportunities for joint worship
- 3 Ministry among refugees and advocacy for asylum seekers, including participation of many Cathedrals in the national sanctuary and 'let them stay' movements
- 4 The work of the Royal Commissions into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Royal Commission into the Child Protection and Youth Detention systems of the Northern Territory.
- 5 Theological education, including fostering distance learning opportunities in rural areas.

## Franciscan & Holy Days To Note

2016

December	1	Requiem for all departed Franciscans
December	8	Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
December	25	THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

2017

January	16	The First Franciscan Martyrs
February	9	Anglican Franciscan Pioneers
March	1	Ash Wednesday
April	11	Brother Geoffrey SSF
April	14	Good Friday
April	16	Easter Sunday
May	16	Margaret of Cortona
May	20	Bernardine of Sienna

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## Community Obedience



From: David White  
(Communications Officer)

Gordon Hooker has updated the online versions of the Community Obedience with the 2016-17 Prayer Cycle to match the printed version posted last week. The Android version is available from <http://tssf.org.au/downloads>. Before installing this version, you will need to uninstall the current version from your device. The web version is available at <http://tssf.org.au/communityobedience/>. When you open this in your browser, if you have previously been using this, you will need to force the browser to refresh the page to update to the current version.

### Commissioning Service

**Reverend Stephen Briggs, tssf,**

as Priest in Charge of the Parish of Banyo  
to be held at St Oswald's Church, 9 Froude  
Street, Banyo. Qld.

on Friday 9th December, at 7 pm, with supper  
to follow.

**Please RSVP Stephen on 32675329 or  
0428136116 by Wednesday 7th December.**

## Called to Joy

By: Gemma Le Mesurier

Advent is a time of joyful expectation. Yet it is easy to become overburdened by the weight of all that we are carrying in our lives and hearts. Going to sleep stressed or worried is a reality for many people. It can even seem that happiness in the current global climate is tantamount to callousness.

So how can we live out our Franciscan vocation to joy amid present evils or looming uncertainty?

**In a word, gratitude.**

Now, "gratitude" is one of those nice words. It's a lovely idea, but it demands a lot from us, and takes a certain courage to live out.

Success, while a relatively fluid term in itself, is often depicted as independence, and having more than others. In a culture where needing others is a form of failure, no wonder so many people find themselves feeling isolated.

Gratitude can turn this idea around. To be grateful is to acknowledge that you are not solely responsible for where you are and what you have. The very act of being grateful brings an awareness that we are connected: to others, and to God.

But being grateful can be challenging.

Being told "everything is a gift" can sound like a cheap platitude, when one actually works hard for what one has. At the same time, when times are tough, it be hard to find things to be grateful for. It is also easy to forget gratitude altogether amid the workings of daily life.

But it is a practice worth pursuing.

Gratitude is a way to engage with the world that neither denies the suffering of others, nor of ourselves. It is not putting on a happy face, or turning away from difficult truths. It is finding the good among it all, even when that good is very small, and seeing God's presence with us in that goodness.

### Third Order Society of

**Saint Francis –**

**Asia-Pacific Province 2017**

### Subscriptions

Greetings Brothers and Sisters tssf,  
Your annual subscription to Third  
Order – Asia –Pacific Province for  
the year 2017 is due on 1 January  
2017 and

Chapter asked that it **be paid by 31<sup>st</sup>  
March 2017**. Payment for 2017 can  
be paid in installments.

If you haven't paid for 2016, please  
do so as soon as possible.

## The Birth of Jesus - 25th December

A reading from the 'Later Admonition and Exhortation, to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance', by Saint Francis.

Taken from: The Hill | Franciscan Readings for the Christian Year – gladly hosted ...2012

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Brother Francis, their servant and subject, sends esteem and reverence, true peace from heaven and sincere love in the Lord to all Christian religious people: clergy and laity, men and women, and to all who live in the whole world.

Because I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer the fragrant words of my Lord to them. Therefore, realizing that I could not visit each one of you personally because of sickness and the weakness of my body, I decided to offer you in this letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, who are spirit and life.

The Most High Father made known from heaven through his holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father – so worthy, so holy and glorious – in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from whose womb he received the flesh of our humanity and frailty. Though he was rich, he wished, together with the most Blessed Virgin, his mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else.

*Let every creature  
in heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the depths,  
give praise, glory, honour and blessing  
to him who suffered so much,  
who has given and will give in the future every good,  
for he is our power and strength,  
who alone is good, who alone is almighty,  
who alone is omnipotent, wonderful, glorious  
and who alone is holy, worthy of praise and blessing  
through endless ages.*

*Amen*

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## MAN UP - please watch

<http://manup.org.au/>

Sent from Catherine Matthews to David White to circulate with our Franciscan community .....

“We have all been touched at some time in our lives by suicide of a relative or friend and know how difficult it is to come to terms with that sadness for the families involved.”

We have a very talented Franciscan amongst us, Paul Hawker, who was a producer for ABC Compass for many years. This year he has, with the “Movember” charity, focused on the issue of Men’s emotional health in a production of a 3 part documentary called “Man Up”.

I do want to encourage everyone to watch. This issue affects us all and our increased awareness and education on the issue may just help someone in the future.



## Four Story-Telling Workshops For Advent

The dates being

**Sunday 27th November,  
4th, 11th and 18th December**

**Time: 4.00pm -5.00pm**

**Venue: Old Friary, 139 Brookfield Rd., Kenmore Hills. Qld. (in Dining Hall)**

**Theme for Workshop 1;**

**Surprise and Opportunity**

**contact: Mac Campbell (for more information)**

**email:mackangbai@gmail.com**

**Mobile: 0449636201**

The four participatory story-telling workshops will be built around four metaphors from Pre-Socratic Greek meaning systems circa 500 BCE., one each week. The four words that will be discussed are:

1. *Kairos* (Meaning roughly, Opportunity)
2. *Metanoia* (Meaning roughly, friendship with Opportunity)
3. *Kenosis* (Meaning displacement, as experienced by, say, a migrant.)
4. *Perichoresis* (Meaning roughly, making room for others in a circle dance)

### Brown Paper Bag Thinkers

Vulnerable Story workshop No 1

Back in 500 BCE, Kairos was the Greek god, of opportunity, (patron god of thieves). A sculpture, (long since lost), showed Kairos (youngest son of Zeus, the CEO of Greek gods) as a young man about to dart off, he’s got wings on his feet, ready to bound away. This god-kid’s got a ridiculously long forelock, (grab him before he darts off), at the back its bald; once he’s off, Opportunity’s gone.

Now let’s tackle vulnerability, that’s where you come in. Every vulnerability is absolutely unique. When they say, I had that, you switch off because they are not you.

This first workshop will start with an invited storyteller who will link Surprise and Opportunity in their own story for about 10 minutes. Then we have a short time for clarification questions followed by a coffee.

Then it’s your turn. You stroll in the Old Friary lawns with someone you’ve never met. You listen carefully to their Surprise and Opportunity story, asking questions respectfully for clarification. Then swap.

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*Joy To The World*

*The Lord Has Come*

## Franciscans Day by Day December 25

Let us weigh wisely, let us wonder at  
Wonders accomplished,  
Nothing more wondrous than this world ever will  
men's lips tell of,  
God coming to us, he that created  
All of creation,  
As God and as man, and God as a man,  
Equally gifted.  
Tremendous, tiny, powerful, feeble,  
Cheeks fair of color,  
Wealthy and needy, father and brother,  
Maker of brothers,  
This, surely, is Jesus, whom we should welcome  
As Lord of rulers,  
Lofty and lowly, Emmanuel,  
Honey to think on.  
An ox and an ass , the Lord of this world,  
A manger is his,  
Bundle of hay instead of a cradle  
For our Lord of hosts.  
- *The Celtic Tradition*



### Dear Sisters and Brothers

During this Advent Season, may we all unite  
in prayer, love and peace for the world, as we await  
the birth of our Saviour.



May we find it in our hearts to be generous of spirit,  
give us reason to live in hope, that light will overrule darkness,  
liberate our thoughts from fears and prejudices, and that we may  
never feel alone.

Thanks to all those who have contributed articles for this  
Edition. The Newsletter is the voice of our Franciscan Community,  
please feel free to share when the Spirit calls.

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

Your co-operation and support is very much appreciated.  
It has been a great privilege journeying with you all in 2016.  
Your co-operation is proactive in providing communication to our  
wider community.

I thank each one of you for providing information/articles,  
photos, and your support in your readiness to assist me, this year.  
Please send submissions to [gloria@radiantpathways.com.au](mailto:gloria@radiantpathways.com.au)  
**The approximate date deadline for the Easter Edition is the 24th  
March, 2017.** I look forward to hearing from you.

The requirements are 300-400 words on Word, unformatted.

For those who wish to write to me, my address is:

26 Fairley St., Indooroopilly, 4068, Qld.

Contacts: 07 33710265 and 0412400374



Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas.  
Pace e bene, Gloria

## Website resources that is important to me:

By: Mark Dougan

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/> , this site is by the Irish  
Jesuits & Loyola Press Chicago, a Jesuit Ministry. It was  
recommended to me by my Spiritual Director at the time,  
Cannon Edward Argyle, Anglican Rector of Albany. It allows  
you to study the Gospel Reading for the day.

<http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie/> & get a commentary  
on the Gospel.

<http://www.backtothebible.org/> , I was listening to it  
occasionally via Shortwave prior to joining The Third Order.  
It was at the time also available on a local Radio Station. I only  
access it now on the Internet. The Daily Broadcast, Monday to  
Friday is important to me and in my Rule of Life.

<http://www.backtothebible.org/bible-reading-plans> .  
These will allow you to read The Bible on a daily basis with  
various one year plans covering the whole Bible & shorter  
challenge.

[www.christianityworks.com](http://www.christianityworks.com) . It was formally the  
Australian office of Back to The Bible. A short quote on their  
history from the website "In 2007, Christianityworks – like  
many of the other international ministries of Back to the Bible  
– became an independent organisation, governed by a Board  
of godly leaders.

But we remain thankful for Back to the Bible's vision,  
support and encouragement over half a century! The living  
legacy of Back to the Bible through Christianityworks today  
and, God willing, well into the future, is the many lives that are  
being changed for the glory of God."

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***“Go forth my soul,  
Go forth without fears;  
For thou hast a good  
Guide for thy journey.  
Go forth, for He who  
Created thee hath  
sanctified thee, and  
Protects thee always,  
and loveth thee with a  
Love tender as that of  
A mother for her son.  
Blessed be Thou, Lord,  
For creating me!***

- *St Clare of Assisi*