

Knit Together

in community and prayer

Newsletter for the Province of Asia-Pacific

Third Order, Society of Saint Francis

www.tssf.org.au

Francistide 2026



Passing the baton

General Chapter at Stroud, 2023

*Mandy Wheatley far left,
Janet Long, second from the right*

Mandy Wheatley Provincial Minister

Oh my goodness! Where did the last six years go?

Jan Down, our newsletter editor, asked me to share some highlights from my time serving as Provincial Minister Asia-Pacific from 2020 to 2026. Writing today from the Old Monastery at Stroud, I am listening to the gentle kitchen chatter next door in the Monastery as we trial the position of Resident Priests, aiming to bring prayer-life back to the Sisters of Clare Chapel in what is now a busy retreat centre.

As I finish my term of office, I remember many, many happy times here with the sisters and brothers of the Third Order, the First Order Brothers, the Friends of the Monastery and others who have visited, worshipped, stayed and marvelled at the beauty of these holy mudbrick buildings, grounded in nature.

Here, in June 2023, we held our first face-to-face TSSF Chapter after Covid. Last year, in August, we attended a wonderful General Chapter and Conference in South Australia, thanks to Jeannie Minnis and her team who shared their gracious hospitality with us.

As an 11-year-old at the Sisters of the Church School I attended in Adelaide, we often prayed for PNG Martyrs and I dreamed of visiting there and Sri Lanka to meet the people. God answered that childhood prayer through the Third Order in my sixties!

In 2024 and 2025 I travelled to PNG with Br Christopher John, meeting Rita and as many TSSF members as I could, in Popondetta, Kokoda, Alotau, Dogura and Goroka. Two projects have been funded by Franciscan Aid, with the help of Andrew MacIntyre since then, one for pigs and poultry in Goroka, 2025 and now a women's sewing-business in Kokoda.

I was invited to Sri Lanka for Br Michael Samanithan's profession in 2024, visiting Kandy, where the Third Order continue to support one girl, Anushiya at Mowbray College doing her O-levels. I was awed to meet TSSF groups in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Korea, who are hard-working, generous and gentle.

In 2021 the Provincial Ministers came to Bungendore, Australia. In 2023 IPTOC met in High Leigh, Hertfordshire, England; with First and Third Orders planning for a flourishing, Franciscan family. I was joined by Hyeran Helena Yang and Sally Buckley.

The strength of TSSF prayer through the years of Covid, bushfires, deaths and joys, have lifted me up through many challenging times. They helped me to organise and conduct Francistide Retreats and international visits of Provincial Ministers. They supported me through Regional leadership changes and in attending Conferences in New Zealand, Perth, Adelaide, North Queensland and Brisbane.

I delighted in working with other Holy Orders through ACARLA (Advisory Council for Anglican Religious Life in Australia), supporting three women who, in September will take vows of prayer and celibacy, at the Anglican Cathedral in Ballarat, with our Provincial Bishop Protector, Garry Weatherill. When Garry retires in October, Archbishop Jeremy Greaves (Brisbane) will step into his shoes. Please keep them both in your prayers.

Franciscans everywhere are praying and working hard to make Christ known, across cultures and ages. We are extending and reinterpreting the principles of Francis and Clare to our modern context. It is such a privilege to be part of this team effort, undergirded by faith and faithfulness to Francis' and Clare's vision.

My prayer for our next Provincial Minister, Janet Long (NSW A) is from Psalm 91:

'Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide under the shadow of the Almighty, they shall say to the Lord, "You are my refuge and my stronghold; my God in whom I put my trust."

I pass the baton to her with deep gratitude and joy in my heart, as I know she will lead the Third Order well and with loving kindness. May the Almighty and merciful God bless her and keep us all in Christ. **Amen.**

Janet Long:

Mandy has graciously led us through the last six years of change – through the pandemic, natural disasters, political and societal change and personal sadness. We thank her for her compassion and her leadership. It is my honour and privilege to now take over. I ask for your prayers as we seek together to find, as Francis exhorted us, what is ours to do – as individual Tertiaries, as local regions, and as a growing province.

'Being knit together in community and prayer ... to win others to His love.'



*Jim Wheatley
1984 – 2025*

*'Always encouraging
me on this journey in
life, and now with
God.'*



*Mandy, left of
centre, under the
Modawa tree, at
the Cathedral site
in Dogura
PNG, 2024*



Dr Janet Long

Non-violent communication as a tool for peace

Lynn Kim tssf, South Korea



Lynn Kim

Non-violent communication, created by Marshall Rosenberg, is often called the language of life or the language of connection. I've found it immensely valuable in my personal life and for living in community.

Over the last three years I've lived in a co-living (a share-house community) where we learn and practise NVC together. It has opened my eyes to small violences we act out unknowingly such as 'othering' and judgement, and has equipped me to embrace difficult conversations and empathize deeply. As a conflict avoidant (and generally avoidant) person this has been an incredible gift. Also, NVC has encouraged me to communicate in a way that gives life and builds peace.

Being a Franciscan in my co-living community gives me a sense of responsibility and contribution. Although I haven't studied NVC extensively, as a long-term member of the co-living I have run workshops at our monthly family meetings, and I hope that the following gives you tools both for your inner dialogue and your daily conversations.

NVC has a large curriculum, so I will try to describe briefly just the four steps most commonly taught as the NVC model of conversation. These are: observation, feelings, needs, and requests:

1. Observation

The NVC process starts in our mental dialogue and questions how we interpret situations. This step asks us to state what a camera would see, rather than our judgements of what happened.

We can so often put labels on certain behaviours, on others, and ourselves. This judgemental and critical voice is called 'jackal' language. The jackal believes it knows what is right and wrong, makes moralistic judgements, and is not curious. Still, the jackal in us is a tragic expression of beautiful needs.

When we embrace and listen to our inner jackal with compassion, we can shift to the giraffe, which has the biggest heart of all animals and represents NVC. I find many parallels between NVC and Christian teachings.

Letting go of the blaming, critical, self-righteous jackal voices requires humility and grace. I thought I was doing great at being humble until I

became aware of my subtle jackal voice and how it separated me from others. Once we find grace to embrace our inner giraffe, we can move on to identifying feelings and needs.

2. Feelings

All feelings arise from underlying needs that are met or unmet. It can be helpful to use an emotion wheel or a list of emotion words to help articulate what is alive in us. Feelings are sometimes confused with thoughts, which can sound something like 'I feel like they don't care.' Personally, practising embodiment and somatic techniques has helped me (an Enneagram type 7) connect to my body and recognise feelings as soon as they arise.

3. Needs

All needs are universal – this means that we can empathise with others' needs, instead of trying to understand their behaviour or the strategy they chose to meet their needs.

When meeting someone whose behaviour I disagree with I may notice judgemental thoughts, and then choose curiosity and wonder what needs they may be trying to meet. This could be safety, connection, recognition, autonomy, novelty, or fun and play.

Recognising our own needs can also be a part of self-compassion. If jackal voices of shame, guilt, or criticism arise, we can get curious about what beautiful needs are behind them. If we want to ask others for help in meeting these needs, we can express requests.

4. Requests

Genuine requests are open to receive a 'no,' while demands are not open to receive refusal. The classic model is to state observations, express our feelings and needs, and lastly make our request. This could sound something like this: 'After I said hello you walked straight ahead, so I felt confused and a little hurt. I wondered if you had heard me, or if I'd done something wrong. Honesty and shared reality feel important to me in this moment. How does it feel for you to hear me say this?'

Of course, this can feel unnatural and over the top. Over time though, everyone finds their own way of integrating the four steps in a way that feels authentic to them. In fact, practising NVC in my inner dialogue alone has been transformative in increasing self-compassion and attuning to whatever is alive in me.

What I find so compelling is NVC is that at its core, it is about loving life and loving our current reality. It is the vision of a world where systems are built around meeting needs and connection to all living beings.

To dive deeper, check out the Centre for NVC and these resources:

www.cnvc.com
<https://nvcacademy.com>
<https://nglcommunity.org/>



Vale Lex Nason tssf

Qld B / NNSW

1946 – 2026

Some tributes from tertiaries

Gloria Malouf-Marsh

It is with deep sadness that I learned of the passing of our dear Brother Lex. Lex always showed stoic courage and yet always had a smile on his face. He was a true Franciscan. He always did his best, showing the outside world how well he was managing, but inwardly showed humility and acceptance with health challenges. He was a wonderful example of carrying his cross and moving on. May we learn from him, the grace, peace, joy and love he shared with others despite his struggle. He has fought a good fight.



*Lex Nason tssf
Sandra Beck's interview with Lex
can be found in the Advent edition
of Knit Together, 2022:
<https://tinyurl.com/3877vfnw>*

Sandra Beck (some from 2022)

Lex once said 'We are all disabled; the important thing is what we do about it'. When I was teaching at Montrose School working with physically disabled students, I used Lex's statement on posters I made for the Year of the Disabled.

It was not possible to go anywhere with Lex without hearing people call 'Hi, Lex', and he would launch into discussing some interesting topic. As well as his wide range of interests and adventurous spirit, he was a great lover of classical music, ballet and opera, attending each several times a year. He was widely travelled. He worked as a librarian for 20 years with the Queensland Health Department and had a Masters in Theology.

Another story about Lex is I was staying at Bribie with him and I took him for a swim in the sea. I had hold of him by the feet but a current got him and swung him around. Luckily people were walking past on the beach and I was able to get help to bring him to shore.

Jeni Antees

Lex always inspired me to live the best I could with what I have. To watch him at the ballet, opera, orchestra – swaying, singing, laughing, clapping as he could – taught me so much about simple sweet joy and where it really comes from.

Vale Miran Regina Hyun tssf

**Woo-whee Elizabeth Nahm
tssf, Korea**

I would like to thank TSSF members who attended the August 13 memorial prayer service for the late Miran Regina Hyun, who passed away on August 10. Thank you Mandy, Glenys, and Patricia from Australia, and Tony from Hong Kong, for joining us for the whole service.

The late Miran Regina Hyun was 60 years old and a member of Sejong Church of the Diocese of Daejeon in Sejong City, a new city built for national administrative purposes. In addition to serving the church and the local community, Miran translated the Franciscans International newsletter into Korean and shared it with us.

In late July, the Third Order in Korea conducted a survey to mark this year's 800th anniversary of Francis' transitus. It was an opportunity to reflect on the past of both our order and our Franciscan journeys, examine the present, and cautiously forecast the future. Miran responded to every question on the survey with great sincerity and brightness.

During the memorial service, many Korean members spoke, including Sister Jemma, Sister Juliana, Sungsoon Lucy Edward Lee, Yusunn Lee, Sunjin Ezekiel Park, and others. The efforts of Yaein Anna Kim, who translated from Korean to English via the chat window, also made the memorial service more meaningful. Thank you everyone.

Almighty and merciful God,
you love us unconditionally and walk with us always.
Have mercy on us so that we may live each day in health and joy,
trusting that you are by our side.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Photo taken when the Korean members met for the Transitus in 2024 and carried out profession vows. Those professed that day included the late Miran Hyun. L-R: Sunjin Ezekiel Park; Yaein Anna Kim; Miran Regina Hyun. See page 13 for Korean translation

Art fosters feeling for creation

Why Creation Care Matters: A Creative Way to Explore God's Invitation – Theology and Practice

Sally Shaw, Ark House Press, 2026.

ISBN 978-1-7646163-3-1, Paperback, 284 pages.

See Ark House publishing for a list of stockists:

<https://tinyurl.com/56tz3wvf>

Reviewed by Ted Witham tssf

Dr Sally Shaw's timely book shows how arts-based workshops may encourage evangelical Christians to take the climate crisis more seriously.

Sally steps us through the progress of her thinking, beginning with her realisation that God was calling her to greater understanding of creation and its care, leading to the planning and execution of two workshops and her conclusions and reflections.

Sally Shaw holds a Doctor of Ministry from the Adelaide Uniting College of Leadership and Theology. Her studies centred on the theology and practice of creation care. She now lives in an eco-community where she continues to put into practice what she has learned. Sally is a Director of the evangelical environmental group A Rocha.

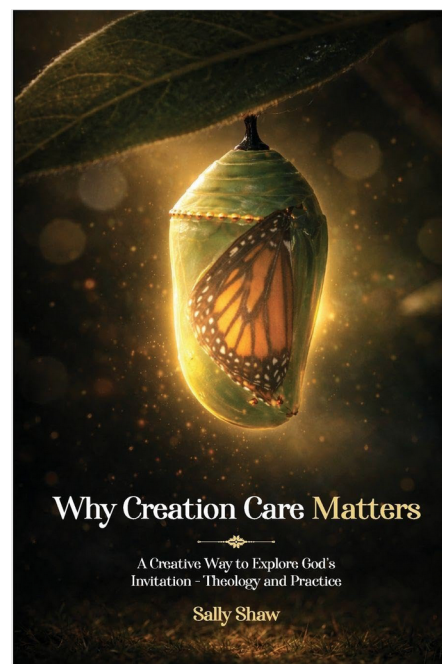
Reading *Why Creation Care Matters* prompted me to ask two questions. Who is this book for? And, Why would Franciscans benefit from it?

The book is thoughtfully designed with a striking cover, featuring an emergent monarch butterfly photographed through the translucent skin of its pupa. The text is presented as an academic paper, with sections and sub-sections, footnotes and an extensive bibliography. The writing is clear and uses only a little academic jargon. Explanations are appropriately detailed and illustrated by tables and diagrams.

The book presents a rational case for the efficacy of the workshops. Its primary audience seems to be potential workshop leaders, who will find in it the rationale for a workshop and the practical steps to implement it. Many tertiaries are leaders and teachers in their parishes, so the book will inspire some Third Order members to run their own similar workshop.

The book provides sufficient resources to present a one-day workshop or to turn the outline into weekend courses or courses run over a series of weeks.

The problem of evangelical Christians avoiding Creation issues is real: as long ago as the 1950s, the evangelical Moody Publishers put out a series of films on Creation. (They were **films** back then, shown by threading through a projector!) The films, aimed at evangelical Christians, often evoked overwhelming awe. Moody Publishers knew that excellent



art provides the emotional connection to persuade Christians to take the environment seriously.

Not only evangelicals, but all Christians have been contaminated by ideas that Christian faith is primarily rational and propositional*.

We all need to be prompted to love God with all our hearts and minds, including our feelings.

The workshops Sally Shaw has initiated apply the same thinking. Christians' mission is not only to win souls as some evangelicals have been taught ('to make Christ known' as we Tertiaries claim as our first Object), but we are also to love every Brother and Sister, whether human, animal or any other creature. The workshops are experiential as well as didactic, and the art response at the end of the workshop seeks to bring together the emotions and thoughts of participants.

The art works shown in the book were more like mind maps, visual representations of what participants *thought* rather than showing in shape and colour changed *feelings*. Workshop leaders could evoke more emotional responses by providing a wide range of art materials (pastels, water-colours, coloured pencils, modelling clay) and instructing participants to use shapes and colours to show their feelings, and to avoid using words in their pictures.

Sally has gathered a large bundle of resources of all kinds that provide background to her thinking; the questionnaires she used before and after the workshops; links to a variety of AV material, and art-related resources including pertinent poems by Malcom Guite (Church of England priest), Judith Wright (Australian poet and activist) and Mary Oliver (US nature poet).

Rather than overload the book with lists of books and resources, these resources are made available online. The Definitions and Appendices (30-page pdf document) can be downloaded at no cost from the author's website www.theoterra.au under **Resources**.

I commend Sally for her enthusiasm encouraging Christians to make a real difference in the climate crisis. This book is a practical guide to help people appreciate the wonder of God's creation and our part in looking after it.

Ted Witham is a Third Order Franciscan, a priest, a former religious educator, and a Past President of the Australian Association for Religious Education (AARE).

* For example, we call the creeds a *statement* of faith, but the first word in both the Apostles' and Nicene creeds in the original Greek is πιστεω (*pisteuo*), I trust (as in, I trust in God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit). The official translation into Latin of πιστεω was '*credo*', *credo in unum Deum*, I give my heart to God...) from '*cor*', heart, and (maybe) '*redo*' I give back. These originals were translated into early English '*I byleve*', which meant, 'I hold dear', 'I love'. Our problem is that the meaning of 'I believe' has changed but not the word.



Could you write for this page on care for creation in crisis? I suggest about 350 words plus a photo if possible (at least 1MB please). Thank you!
Due-date for next issue:
6 November 2026
Please send to:
jeidown@protonmail.com

Franciscan advocacy in turbulent times – Michele Dunne OFS

From a FI interview:

In early May, we accompanied a group of Franciscans who attended the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) which examines and shapes international policies. Michele Dunne, a former US diplomat and the current Executive Director of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN), was among them. After visiting the UN in New York, she sat down with us for an interview where she gave us insight into her work, her personal journey with God, and shared her perspective on the political situation of the United States. (Full interview at: <https://tinyurl.com/3uwafdfk>)



Michele Dunne OFS

As the Executive Director of FAN, can you tell us a bit about your work and what your network is doing?

Of course! The Franciscan Action Network was founded in 2008 as an advocacy organisation by Franciscans to provide a Franciscan voice on public issues in the United States (US). We try to help Franciscans to mobilise around issues they care about, such as the environment, peace and the role of the US in building it, as well as solidarity with marginalised people, including migrants or people who suffer from poverty.

Before you started at FAN, you used to work as a diplomat for the US. Could you tell us a little bit about your work?

I was a diplomat for around 20 years. Since my work focused on the Middle East, I speak Arabic fluently. As an area specialist, I worked on issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian war and issues around the Arab Spring.

In 2013, I had a personal calling to join the Secular Franciscan Order, to which I professed in 2016. I had this strong calling to speak up much more about justice and peace inside the United States, and I became active in FAN as a constituent. In 2019, I went on a pilgrimage to Assisi, which had a profound effect on me. After that experience, I felt called to leave my diplomatic work behind and dedicate myself to the Franciscan Action Network, which I joined as executive director in 2021.

What do you think about migration politics right now? What is your perspective on migration politics in the US?

Our migration policy is a disaster for both the world and the US. Americans cannot agree among ourselves on migration policies and have gradually reached a point where the system has broken down.

Now, we have disastrous deportation campaigns. People who have come to the US suffer enormously. Most of them came with good intentions, wanting to contribute to society and the economy. This suffering pains me. Deportations and closing off migration will also definitely affect the US economy. This is a top issue for policy advocacy in FAN.

During the IMRF, it was also painful to hear about other organisations affected by the US, including non-governmental organisations whose staff have had their visas denied, causing unneeded hardship.

I learned a lot about international perspectives on US migration policies during the review and I am eager to work more with FI to complement each other's contributions. Already, we have done joint events with FI to show our constituents the global picture and how the US is seen outside its own borders.

It was a pleasure to be a part of the delegation. Thank you for the invitation!

Franciscan Action Network

FAN includes 53 religious communities, 35 local Franciscan Justice Circles, and 20,000 individual members across the United States. Some of their core issues are the environment, solidarity with people on the margins, and peace. The latter encompasses both the role of the US regarding war and conflict around the world as well as peace inside the US, including gun violence and political polarisation.



At the International Migration Review Forum

The Final Leveler

**WELCOME,
SISTER DEATH**

Welcome, Sister Death:

A Franciscan Preparation for Holy Dying

Ted Witham, Spirit-Ed, 2026, ISBN: 0975012290, 9780975012291

Reviewed by Stephen Moore tssf

**A Franciscan Preparation
for
Holy Dying**



TED WITHAM TSSF

Ted Witham is a pragmatist when it comes to death and dying. Clear-eyed, he's able to look death in the eye, unadorned and realistic. 'We die, and our bodies decompose back to the atoms and molecules that make up the universe.' His pragmatic take on mortality is at odds with today's culture of denial that shapes language, understanding and practice – we are a death-denying society.

Since half of the patients today die in hospitals, with transfusions and strangers, it's become easier for us wipe death away from our minds. Funeral homes reflect the general desire to hide death by cosmetic wonders performed on cadavers, so they look better than they did in life. Flowers and saccharine music complete the picture, and an elaborate vocabulary of euphemisms is developed to circumvent the fact that death has even taken place.

Ted's focus with Franciscan overtones is the paradox at the heart of the Christian faith – life is a gift and a trust to be enjoyed, and yet in death we are free from pain and enter fully into the joy of God. This is the tension to which Paul referred (Phil. 1: 23-24). In his own life, Jesus asked God several times if he could forgo his own death (Jn. 12: 27), Lk, 22: 42-44; Mk. 15: 34).

Ted warmly shares his insights – much as TSSF novice Olly Ponsonby has done in his just-published book, *Fragments From Holy Ground*.

Richly anecdotal, Ted draws on his own experiences to portray death not just as inevitable but positively: 'I want to explore what death is and how our choices will help us die a good death', he writes. 'We can choose to make death something we *do*, rather than something that is *done to us*' (his italics). Evoking St Francis, he writes, 'I can choose a rich and joyful death. I can die singing.' Die positive.

Paul in 1Cor. 15 spells it out: Christianity without resurrection is a lie; because Christ rose, we will overcome death; how we live is affected by our understanding of death; at our resurrection we will have new bodies; and our victory over death calls forth thanksgiving to God. These convictions provide a Christian framework for understanding death and resurrection, and substantiate Thomas Talley's view that 'the meaning of every illness is dying and every healing is resurrection'. (*Worship Reforming Tradition*, Washington DC, Pastoral Press, 2021, p 55).

Ted's contribution to this, the hardest-of-all subjects, encourages the eternal goal of accomplishing the Church's mission to make whole what is broken, to gather what is scattered, and to do more than simply bury the dead. To face death, we must first understand life.

Family

Jeni Antees tssf



Sparkly grass; birds foraging in tree bark;
A crisp lazy breeze off the wet trees
Bringing the most glorious scent.
Flower petals and leaves swirl as they fall.
Glistening, hardened tree sap the colour of burgundy.
In the people-silence of retreat
Nature feels loud, big.
Everywhere.
All-embracing.
This.
This is family –
Creation keeping me company,
Enjoying my presence as I enjoy theirs.
Never alone.

©Jeni Antees, July 2026

현미란 레지나의 안식을 기도합니다

남우회 엘리사벳, 한국 제3회원

고 현미란 레지나를 추모하는 8월 13일의 저녁 기도회(고인은 8월 10일에 돌아가심)에 참석해주신 회원분들께 감사드립니다. 호주의 Mandy, Glenys, Patricia, 홍콩의 Tony, 접속해 주시고 내내 함께해주셔서 감사합니다.

고 현미란 레지나 씨는 60세로 대전교구 세종교회 교인이었습니다. 세종시는 행정적 목적으로 만들어진 신도시입니다. 고인은 교회와 지역에서 봉사하는 일은 물론 우리 회 안에서는 '프란시스코 인터내셔널 소식지'를 한국어로 번역해서 모두에게 나누어주었습니다.

한국 제3회는 7월 하순에, 올해 성인 서거 800주년을 맞이해서 설문 사업을 진행하였습니다. 우리 회와 자기 자신 이렇게 양쪽 다의 지난날을 돌아보고 현재를 점검하고 미래를 조심스레 전망해보는 기회였는데, 고 현미란 레지나 씨는 그 설문 모든 문항에 매우 성실하고 밝게 응답을 하였습니다.

추모기도회 중에 켄마 수녀님, 황임란 프란시스, 율리아나 수녀님, 이성순 루시 에드워드, 이유선, 박순진 에제키엘 등 여러 한국의 회원들이 추모의 뜻을 말씀해주셨습니다. 채팅 창을 통해 한국어를 영어로 통역해주신 김예인 씨의 수고도 추모 자리를 더욱 뜻깊게 해주었습니다. 모든 분께 감사드립니다.

+ 전능하시고 자비로우신 주님, 우리가 어떠한 모습일지라도 조건 없이 우리를 사랑하시고 우리와 동행해주시나이다. 우리 또한 어떠한 형편에 놓이든지, 주님이 우리 옆에 계심을 신뢰하면서 하루하루 건강하게 기쁘게 살아가도록, 주님, 우리에게 자비를 베풀어주소서. 예수 그리스도를 통하여 기도하나이다. 아멘



2024년 10월 전이예식 때 현미란 레지나가 이 날 함께 서약한 회원들과 찍은 사진. 왼쪽에서부터 박순진 에제키엘, 김예인 안나, 현미란 레지나.

