

THE THIRD ORDER

Province Newsletter,

PNG & East Asia

Joy to the World - Good Will to all People

Advent Edition

THE ADVENT WREATH



The Advent Wreath is a circular evergreen wreath (real or artificial) with five candles. Four around the wreath and one in the centre. The wreath is symbolic and a vehicle to tell the Christmas Story. The Circle of the Wreath reminds us of God Himself, His

eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or no end.

The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have of God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. Candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His Son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent. There are usually three purple or blue candles and one pink or rose candle. They remind us that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life and hope.

The progression in the lighting of the candles symbolizes the various aspects of our waiting experience. The centre candle is called the Christ candle. It is lit at Christmas and worshippers rejoice. The central location of the Christ candle reminds us that God is forever shedding His light on us and the world. The colour purple symbolizes penitence (sorrow for wrong-doing) and humility. As a religious season, Advent is a time of solemn preparation for the Feast of Christmas – the dawn of new light in the world and the fulfilment of hope, with the birth of Jesus. During the four weeks of Advent we reflect on hope, peace, joy and love.

Dear sister or brother

Two themes rise out of the Christmas story: God's love expressed in giving, and human love expressed primarily through a significant event in the life of an ordinary family.

St Luke tells of the angels who announce to the shepherds that the birth of a poor boy in their town of Bethlehem is – unlikely as it seems – of utmost importance to God. They fill the sky with light and song, overwhelming the shepherds with their message of God's self-giving.

St Matthew tells the story of strange wise men, following their own astrological signs, who present the new-born boy with gifts suitable for a king, or for one even greater than a king.

The family at the centre of all this cosmic attention is an ordinary family. Joseph and Mary are not from the ruling or high priestly class. They are like us: and, as in most of our families, the birth of a child is the most wonderful life-event that we will experience. A new baby magnifies the love that parents have for each other and draws out of the parents a flood of love for the child.

This love is so strong that even if we have not personally become parents, we have experienced it as children ourselves, or we have seen it in someone close to us.

God gives and human beings become aware of the great store of love God nurtures in us.

May the love of Joseph and Mary for Jesus and for each other draw out from you a flood of love to enrich those around and be a sign of God's love expressed in generous giving.

Peace, joy and love.

Ted Witham,

Minister Provincial

Discipline, Devotion, Delight....

a personal journey with Francis & Clare

By: Dr. Robert deCaen

Our journey through life starts with learning Discipline. Mine started at a Methodist boarding school when I was eight. Violent acts or loving happenings crowded in those early days. After a year at a University, which I enjoyed greatly pulled one in line by exam times! Mine came with Conscriptio into the Army. Luckily, school and university trained me to accept discipline, and enjoy worshipping God. But I was spotted by my superiors for a commission as officer, for the service abroad: first India and then Germany. I enjoyed both. But time doesn't stand still when things are going well. I returned after years abroad to complete University training, and then training for the sacred ministry. Here I met the Society of St. Francis.

The SSF encouraged us students to go down with them into the hop-fields of Kent, and work alongside East Enders, whose holidays were spent there. My fellow students were my age, while we learned to enjoy the company of Br. Douglas, Br. Kenneth, Br. Peter, and each other. Living rough in outhouses, I took the first step to joining SSF in becoming a Companion. Then I spent three years in the docks of London, as a junior priest, and then three years back in the Army as a chaplain in Germany. I need hardly mention getting well acquainted with poverty in the docks, and then with a defeated nation: whose men and women had given themselves an identity, as defeatist, loveless, going nowhere.

I had learned by now, that never must you allow yourself to 'go nowhere'. Nor allow others to feel defeated, or loveless. Jesus, at the center, as His journey is shown in the New Testament, must become our journey: bringing healing and love to others. His disciple Francis was a marvelous example to follow. Then a teaching appointment in Australia, was where my Devotion to Jesus and Francis flourished, and I took my second step to both Discipline and Devotion, and I became a Companion. Now nearly thirty years later I am seeking to bring others to follow Jesus and Francis, so as to share what has become the third part of my discovery, Delight. Francis and Clare continue to show me in a world lost in fears, and ignoring Jesus, a warmth of Love, daily kept fresh, as a Third Order member, delighting in God's Goodness.

Forward in faith..with Francis and Clare...a life's journey

By: Dr. Robert deCaen

I had spent nearly a year training to join forces to invade France for the Normandy beach-head, and was waiting for the moment to face the German machine-guns, when I was miraculously pulled away and sent to India for three years. Here I met Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, as an every-day shoulder touching experiencing. I fell in love with the country, and my Christianity got a strong nudge towards Buddhism. Here stillness, meditating as a central ingredient of worship, flooded into a Western activist attitude, of "getting things done, now"! When some years after World War 2, and the division of India into two – Pakistan/and India proper, I returned 'home', I had my first experience of a Franciscan hop-picking mission in Kent, with twenty other young men and women and became a Companion. Brothers Peter and Kenneth were there, and we found ourselves comfortable with Daily Offices and working alongside East End (London) men and women whose summer holiday was to earn money picking hops. It made me feel comfortable, acknowledging my faith in a non-church atmosphere. Kings College London, an Anglican foundation, provided the chance, with Canon Eric Abbot, to mix with non-believers of several strata of society and nationality. I chose to enter the Anglican ministry. I went to Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and experienced a low church attitude and teaching, rather than the High Church Kings College, London. Following that I went to the slums of the East End of London as a young curate. Here the War left a terrible mark: acres of empty spaces, where buzz bombs had destroyed homes and people. I had to learn to door-knock only to meet peoples' expressionless faces wondering what I wanted!! I ran a dance where several hundred young 20/25 year old 'teddy boys' with knives in their jack-boots, and teddy-girls, swung around for a few hours on Friday night. I concluded with prayer, and they all were very gracious to allow 'the young curate' to "have his say"! I next spent three years in Germany with the allied forces as an Army chaplain, in a totally disillusioned country, where many people with TB had been turned back from migrating to the USA. What do you say to them? Where does Christianity fit in there? How would Francis address their double problem: total hopelessness?

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

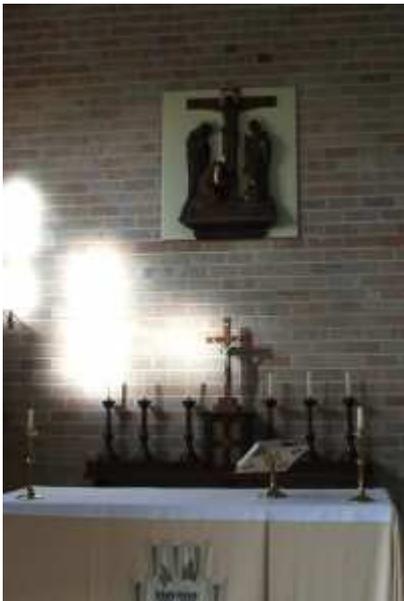
Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and W.A.

November 17, 2010

Posted by Ted Witham in : Franciscan, Spirituality

Here in Western Australia, we hold St Elizabeth of Hungary in special love and esteem, because of the presence here from 1928-1957 of the Anglican Sisters of St Elizabeth who worked in the south-west of this State.

Tertiary George Harvey grew up near their mother house in Bunbury and recalls the huge influence the Sisters had on him: as a server, he was particularly conscious of their devotion to worship. We would probably now regard their style of worship as old-fashioned Anglo-Catholic, but for George and the Sisters then, this worship was rich and redolent of God's presence. That atmosphere still permeates the little chapel dedicated to St Elizabeth.



Alongside their rich life of devotion, the Sisters devoted themselves to the care of the Group Settlers, English people who were brought to Western Australia to open up dairy farms and populate the forest country south of Bunbury. The

Sisters lived in the same struggling pioneer communities in Busselton, Margaret River and elsewhere.

Those of us who live in this region know that behind the picturesque vineyards and glorious beaches lies a history of hardship, as newcomers came without farming skills to an environment that can be quite harsh and unforgiving. Huge karri and jarrah trees had to be cut down, or killed by ring-barking, thus delaying any income that the pioneers might derive from the land. And even when the land was ready for cattle, prosperity was still not to be found. It is only in recent years that better ways of living in this country are being found, as the harvesting of old-growth forests has been slowed, and tourism established as the main industry.

The Christmas Ballad

Once a little baby born in old Bethlehem
Under the shade of the horses' pepper tree,
And his hands had the prints of the nails, alleluia,
You'll be a pilgrim, my darling, with me.

You'll walk to heaven, you'll walk to heaven,
You'll walk to heaven alongside me,
And his hands had the prints of the nails, alleluia,
You'll be a pilgrim, my darling, with me.

It rained all day at the time of his christening,
It brought down blessings for you and me.
And his hands had the prints of the nails, alleluia,
You'll be a gosseller, my darling, with me.

You'll tell the story, you'll tell the story,
You'll tell the story that sets the world free.
And his hands had the prints of the nails, alleluia,
You'll be a gosseller, my darling, with me.

Along came old Satan to dry up all the blessing,
And put an end to love that's true.
And his hands were as smooth as anything that's empty,
He is a poisoner of the wells for you.

You'll guard our water, you'll guard our water,
You'll guard the springs of community.
And Christ's hands had the prints of the nails,
alleluia,
You'll keep its love and its purity.

He fought old Satan on top of Hill of Calvary,
He beat him down to his end, you see.
And his hands had the prints of the nails, alleluia,
You'll laugh for ever, my darling, with me.

You'll laugh for ever, you'll laugh for ever,
We'll laugh together for Jesus is free.
And his hands had the prints of the nails, alleluia,
We'll laugh for ever, for Jesus is free.

By: Ted Witham 1996
Tune: "Waltzing Matilda"

*Be the change
you wish to see
in the world.*

~Gandhi

Transition Towns and Tertiaries

By: Jan Down

Melbourne

This article has continued from last Issue

The penny dropped for me two years ago, when I read *Hot gospel: good news for a planet in trouble*, a Zadok paper by Ian Barns, who is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, at Murdoch University in WA.

I already knew that climate change was a very serious problem, that oil supplies were diminishing, and that there were many other environmental problems. What Barns' paper did for me was to put it all together and wake me up to the fact that the planet is facing an emergency situation he calls 'the triple whammy' of climate change, oil depletion and ecosystem decline. He mentioned some UN sponsored research in 2005 that found 16 out of 24 ecosystem services (such as fish stocks, forest resources, soils etc) were in decline or showing signs of stress. He explained the urgency of the need to act on climate change and to plan for life beyond cheap oil.

Barns set out three possible scenarios for the future: a successful transition to a sustainable industrial economy (seen to be unlikely); de-industrialisation and down-scaling in a long emergency (probably our best hope); or catastrophe and collapse. He showed that what is *not possible* is for life to carry on the way it is now.

At the end of the paper, Barns suggests some practical action for Christians, arguing for corporate action at the level of local congregations or Christian communities rather than just individual action. He argues it is likely that there will need to be 'a devolution of productive economic activity to the community level' and makes mention of the Transition Town movement as offering hope of restoring resilience in local communities.

After reading this paper, I was galvanised. I knew I had to do something and I liked the idea of doing it collectively – individual action seemed so ineffectual, and government so immovable. When I came across Rob Hopkins' *Transition Handbook* in the local library, I knew I had found something that filled the gap between the individual and the government. Some time later, a 'random' (or should I

say serendipitous) email from someone I had met only once informed me that a group of people in my area were interested in starting a Transition Town, and were inviting anyone who was interested to meet them at a local coffee shop. I was very surprised and delighted. Michael and I went down to the cafe and met a handful of wonderful, inspiring people – and the rest is history (which you can read on our website). Local council is highly supportive of our efforts and has provided a community hall for our monthly meetings as well as a small amount of funding for various projects. We now have a core group of 7 (and growing) as well as three sub-groups – one for Food, one for Sustainable Transport and another on Community Engagement. We aim to add other groups as more people join us.

The Transport group assisted a local primary school with a very successful Ride to School Day. They are also having some success in persuading council to improve bicycle infrastructure. There are several neighbourhood groups now getting together to support each other in growing vegetables and fruit and keeping chooks. We are helping a number of schools with their vegetable gardens and sustainability in general – and what we are doing has the potential to become a template for all the schools in the area, with the schools then becoming community hubs. We have obtained a grant from the federal government to buy some equipment to help us get the message out to more people, and the local council is funding the upgrading of our website. We are gaining momentum.

transition Towns website

www.transitionnetwork.org

Transition Town Maroondah:

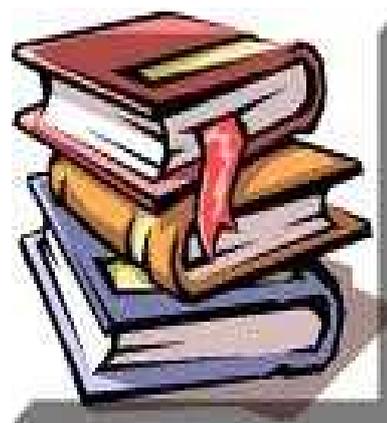
www.ttm.org.au

Date to Note

**Australian visit of
Andre Cirino ofm**

2nd May - 22nd May 2011

There are several other Transition Towns beginning around Melbourne and scores around the country. (There could well be one in your area.) The Transition movement is so much more positive and powerful than traditional activism, which is usually about protesting. Transition Towns – while acknowledging that there needs to be change at government level as well – is about getting on with the solutions ourselves and creating sustainable, resilient communities with a better way of life than the one we have now – communities that are more connected, living life at a slower, saner pace, with respect and space and resources for all people and species. This seems to me like a Franciscan Christian calling.



Bangalow Meeting - 17th July, 2010

By: Michael Hobbs
(North Coast NSW tssf co-ordinator)

Dear Fellow Franciscan,

It was great to be with our friends at the Bangalow meeting on Saturday 17th July, and also to welcome Rev. Richard Brown.

Firstly Eucharist; Bishop Keith was the celebrant with the focus on Saint Bonaventure. This was followed by us individually talking to the group about our Franciscan journey so far, then Glenys McCarrick gave us a presentation about the work of Franciscans International. Lunch was then taken when we were able to enrich our fellowship with those present.

After lunch we discussed the future of the group and encouraged members to go on the retreat. We were grateful for Cleone's work as Regional Minister over the past few years and look forward to Ken taking over on 1st August; and prayed for them both. We finished up with the Community Obedience.

Photos showing John being professed, John Tyman with Cleone under the Saint Damiano Cross and our group.

Once again we are indebted to Rev Russell Trickey for making us welcome and looking after us so well. Also thanks to Glenys McCarrick and Mary Birch for taking photos.

Peace & goodwill,

Book Launch –

**Interpreting Francis and Clare of Assisi
from the Middle Ages to the Present**

**When: Wednesday 8 December
5:30pm for 6pm**

Where: St Paschal's Library, [Yarra Theological Union](#).

Address:

Launched by: Fr Champion Murray ofm
edited by Constant J Mews and Claire Renkin,
Broughton Publishing, Melbourne 2010



An Interview between Father Terry Booth & Terry Gatfield

This is an interview between Father Terry Booth of St Paul's Ashgrove and Terry Gatfield one of his flock who has recently been professed. It has been recently printed in the Church's Pilgrim monthly news letter

Father Terry. *It was delightful to witness your Profession as a Franciscan the other week. Tell me, Terry, why did you choose to become a Franciscan?*

Terry G. *I had better explain that I am not a full Franciscan Brother. I don't wear a robe with the thrice-knotted rope belt. I suppose you know that the three knots represent chastity, poverty and obedience. Well I have screwed up on all three in a big way. So a way has been made open for people like me to enter the order through a different route. The First Order comprises the celibate Brothers and Sisters of St Francis, the second, the Sisters of St Clare and the third is for a motley bunch of people like me who identify with, and embrace, Franciscan spirituality but don't live in community. I am not alone as there are over 1 mission in the third order throughout the world.*

Father Terry. *That's not my question.*

Terry G. *Oh yes, what motivated me? Well, I have been deeply moved in my study of St Francis, the Franciscan Order's history and their wonderful blend of spirituality and work.*

Father Terry. *In what ways specifically?*

Terry G. *I can identify with their passion for Jesus and the power of the gospel as well as the primacy of prayer and contemplation. Their commitment to peace, non-violence and the poor and notwithstanding their very strong position on ecology all resonate with me. Did you know that St Francis has been appointed the Patron Saint of Ecology? Oh yes, and the Franciscans are truly ecumenical, the first order of Francis having been adopted by the Roman Catholic Church while today they are embraced by the Anglican church plus being deeply respected by all the major faiths, including Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists and many of the other world's major religions.*

Yet they have done this without having to compromise their wonderful Christian spirituality and values.

Father Terry. *Where is all this going to take you personally – any ideas?*

Terry G. *Not exactly but being a Franciscan is continually enriching my prayer and study life and constantly challenging my views, attitudes and*

values. In a very special way it is helping me engage in deeper and richer contemplation. I have committed some aspects of Franciscanism and my own journeying to paper and consequently I have had a number of articles published, as well as presenting a few seminars, workshops and directing a small spiritual retreat. Next year I will be publishing a Lenten Study on St Francis. I am going in January to spend time at the Franciscan International Study centre at Canterbury UK to do some research on the book – but Father Terry you know that 'coz you are the co-author. But in general I am not planning anything but waiting on God's timing and leading which may cause me to do less rather than more!

Father Terry. *Congratulations and keep us informed of your travelling. Our blessings go with you on the way to the Franciscans at Canterbury, England in 2011- and get your act together as Lent is fast approaching!*



Henri J M Nouwen

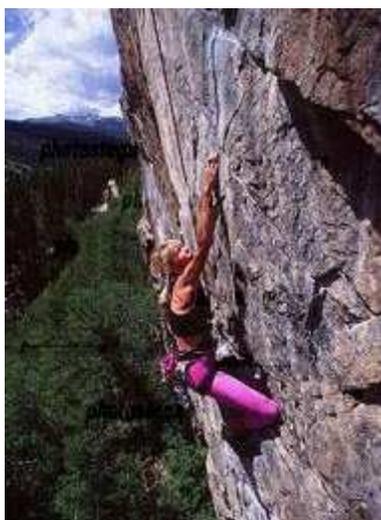
The mystery of love

The mystery of love is that it protects and respects the aloneness of the other and creates the free space where he can convert his loneliness into a solitude that can be shared. In this solitude we can strengthen each other by mutual respect, by careful consideration of each other's individuality, by an obedient distance from each other's privacy and by a reverent understanding of the sacredness of the human heart. In this solitude we encourage each other to enter into the silence of our innermost being and discover there the voice that calls us beyond the limits of human togetherness to a new communion.. In this solitude we can slowly become aware of a presence of him who embraces friends and lovers and offers us the freedom to love each other, because he loved us first (see 1 John 4:19).

[Page 44, 3rd paragraph from the book "Reaching Out"](#)

A Parable - An Ant & A Contact Lens

Brenda was almost halfway to the top of the tremendous granite cliff. She was standing on a ledge where she was taking a breather during this, her first rock climb. As she rested there, the safety rope snapped against her eye and knocked out her contact lens. 'Great', she thought. "Here I am on a rock ledge, hundreds of feet from the bottom and hundreds of feet to the top of this cliff, and now my sight is blurry.' She looked and looked, hoping that somehow it had landed on the ledge. But it just wasn't there.



She felt the panic rising in her, so she began praying. She prayed for calm, and she prayed that she may find her contact lens.

When she got to the top, a friend examined her eye and her clothing for the lens, but it

was not to be found. Although she was calm now that she was at the top, she was saddened because she could not clearly see across the range of mountains. She thought of the bible verse 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth.'

She thought, 'Lord, You can see all these mountains. You know every stone and leaf, and You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me.'

Later, when they had hiked down the trail to the bottom of the cliff they met another party of climbers just starting up the face of the cliff. One of them shouted out, 'Hey, you guys! Anybody lose a contact lens?'

Well, that would be startling enough, but you know why the climber saw it? An ant was moving slowly across a twig on the face of the rock, carrying it!

The story doesn't end there. Brenda's father is a cartoonist. When she told him the incredible story of the ant, the prayer, and the contact lens, he drew a cartoon of an ant lugging that contact lens with the caption, "Lord, I don't know why You want me to carry this thing.. I can't eat it, and it's awfully heavy. But if this is what you want me to do, I'll carry it for You.'

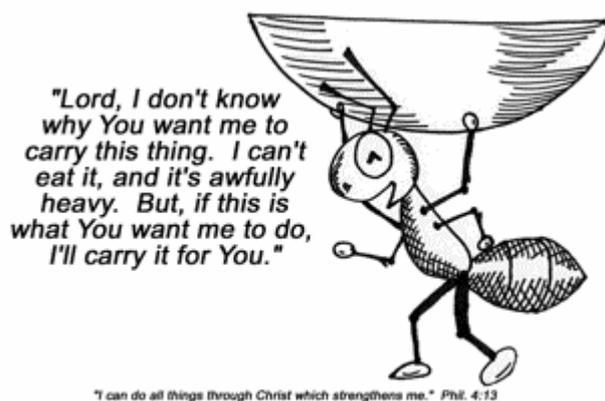


I think it would do all of us some good to say, 'God, I don't know why You want me to carry this load. I can see no good in it and it's awfully heavy. But, if You

want me to carry it, I will.'

God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

Yes, I do love GOD. He is my source of existence and my Savior. He keeps me functioning each and every day Without Him, I am nothing, but with Him,..I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.)Phil. 4:13)



**In dwelling, live close to the ground.
In thinking, keep to the simple.
In conflict, be fair and generous.
In governing, don't try to control.
In work, do what you enjoy.
In family life, be completely present.
When you are content to be simply yourself, And don't compare or compete, Everybody will respect you**

~Tao



Born 22 December 1923 – hence Noël

Professed tssf 1975

Professed Franciscan for 35 years

Born to Eternal Life All Saints Day 2010

A Reading from Saint Clare's Testament:

Among all the other gifts which we have received and continue to receive daily from our glorious God, our vocation is a great gift. For this reason the Apostle writes: "Acknowledge your calling". Therefore, beloved, we must consider the immense gifts which God has bestowed on us, especially those which He has seen fit to work in us through His beloved servant, our blessed Father Francis, not only after our conversion but also while we were still (living among) the vanities of the world. With what solicitude and fervour of mind and body, therefore, must we keep the commandments of our God and Father, so that, with the help of the Lord, we may return to Him an increase of His talents. For the Lord Himself not only has set us as an example and mirror for others, but also for our sisters whom the Lord has called to our way of life, so that they in turn will be a mirror and example to those living in the world. Since, therefore, the Lord has called us to such great things, we are truly bound to bless and praise the Lord and to be strengthened constantly in Him to do good. Therefore, if we have lived according to the form (of life) given us, we shall, by very little effort, leave others a noble example and gain the prize of eternal happiness.

A Loving Eulogy for Noël by her son, John

Welcome. My extended family welcomes everyone attending today. Mum's oldest friends and her most recent ones, the brothers of St Francis who have loved and embraced our family for nearly a half a century, my school friends, our individual friends and indeed everyone who has made the time to attend this day, we welcome you.

It is difficult to find a role model for children and ourselves, yet in Mum I believe that I have found my perfect role model. Noël was simply the most amazing mother anyone could wish for. But more than this, she was a friend and confidant and her generosity of spirit and deep love for her family and friends will be reflected in the grief being felt by so many.

First and foremost in my mind, my mother was a carer, from serving as a nurse during the Second World War to making us feel loved and special at all times.

Nobody could match her as a carer when you were ill. Her attention to those things that matter most, the quietness, the crisp clean sheets and pillowslips, the jugs with little crochet covers, butter balls rolled in sugar for a sore throat and the ubiquitous warmed washer. In an age when many people find little time for others, Noël stood out like a beacon, drawing us all into her warm and comforting arms when we needed it most.

Noël lived a life of generosity of spirit and appreciation of all things and the people she met all felt better for having known her.

Mum was a terrific listener, and everyone benefitted; those seeking spiritual guidance, a neighbour in need of a comforting shoulder, a family member requiring guidance and direction or advice on a business decision through to a grandchild struggling with a problem with a friend. All could confide in her with complete confidence, in the knowledge that they would be heard, never judged and always comforted and directed in an effortless and caring way within the confines of the safe haven that she had created in her home of thirty odd years since the death of our father.

So, how did Noël become this person, someone, about whom it so easy to say good words? Each of us knows part of her life's story but I will endeavour to provide a little insight into the Noël that she rarely spoke about, not because she wasn't proud of her life, but because time with Noël was nearly always about her welcomed visitor.

Mum's birth was expected to be at Christmas in 1923 and so her father decided to call her Noël, or Christmas, and what a perfect name this has been for an individual who spent her life giving her gifts to others. These weren't gifts wrapped in shiny paper. They weren't gifts that now sit on the dusty shelves of our homes, their meaning long forgotten. These gifts were embodied in the love and caring that she gave to us all so effortlessly and graciously that it was only as you were departing, watching her standing, waving from the top balcony, that you realised that you were, as ever, leaving with a heart filled with warmth and a cup brimming over with her spirit.

Mum did, however, give me one very special gift that I have kept on that dusty shelf, a reference book for me to use whenever she wasn't there and I needed a bit of guidance or spiritual direction in my life. It wasn't ever stated as such but Mum managed to get messages across to you without making you feel that you'd just been lectured to. You were never made to feel inferior to her, though on reflection, she outgunned me in every department.

The book was *The Prophet*, which describes the moment in a Prophet's life after making the difficult decision to leave his homeland. He is besieged by those who love him and asked to speak to them: I think that his words capture much of what was central to Noël's life.

"You give but little when you give of your possessions.

It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. There are those who have little to give and give it all.

These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.

They give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue; They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.

Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth".

For Noël, giving came as naturally as breathing and it was never about her, there were no catches.

Noël attended and was Dux of the Fort Street School, established in 1849, it is the oldest government school in Australia, renowned for the accomplishments that its graduates have achieved, I'm certain that they would be proud of Mum.

The school's motto "Every man is the maker of his own fortune" is one that mum embraced for her life as did her love of learning. Mum continued to be a

student all of her life and until recently attended classes with U3A, the university of the third age where she studied everything from cryptic crosswords to modern Australian poetry. Never without a pile of books and magazines at hand, mum was remarkably well read and also liked to keep abreast of current affairs and world events. I was constantly amazed at the amount Mum knew about the business world and most visits resulted in me leaving with little piles of newspaper cuttings that she felt would be of interest to me.

Mum met Dad at the age of twelve and would be in love with him all of her life; his joy, ability to make people laugh and deep love of her and our family proved to be a wonderful choice for her and his birth date of October 4th, St Francis Day, a subtle pointer to how her life without him would unfold.

Mum may have been as giving and caring as Mary McKillop but there are plenty of things that she wasn't.

The modern term, "tech head", is not one that could readily be used when describing Mum's private war with technology. My brother took photos of her television and other items so that when she rang him, as he is the most technically savvy and patient member of our family, he could guide her through the now familiar process that would reinstate her TV, radio or any other item back to a functioning piece of equipment. Those familiar with her radio and CD player will have noticed the black lettering and crosses that they bore which were the creation of my brother. I won't even start on the fun and games we had trying each new season to guide Mum through the complexities of the airconditioner's remote control.

Nana also loved any time that she could spend with her grand children and great grand children who were all important to her and she was never happier than when her tidy unit had been turned upside down and the living room was strewn with baskets, beads, books, coloured pencils, playing cards, puzzles and plates of half eaten food; all evidence of the great time spent together. This mess never worried her. As they grew older she was intensely interested in everything they did and achieved and was keen to attend any and every concert or occasion involving them. Phone calls could last for hours and include piano recitals, singalongs and endless details of the moments that had passed since they had last spoken or seen each other.

Mum had a deep love of everything beautiful but especially flowers. The ritual that Helen had of giving Mum Christmas Bush for the festive season,

cyclamens and little posies of flowers were important to Noël and to her enduring love and relationship with Helen. For Helen, it was the joy on Mum's face when receiving these, for Mum, the sharing of the special love that exists between mother and daughter.

Mum always showed great calmness when under pressure and my brother David managed to test this on many occasions while still maintaining his special bond with her.

On another occasion, having skipped school in Brisbane to visit Sydney for a little bit of R&R during his final year at high school, he answered a knock at his door to find that Mum was "passing by" at the time and thought that she would drop in for a chat... He returned with her to complete his schooling.

It was a shock to our entire family when our Dad died leaving Mum at age 51 without the man she had shared her life with. Easy options have never been Mum's preferred way of doing anything and so, rather than opting for some domestic duties and light reading to see out her years she decided to take her life by the horns in her rather calm and amazing way. Her love of the church remained central to her life as did her concern for others and she became a counselor at Biala, working with alcoholics and those with drug addictions.

After a number of years, her calling to the church became stronger and our mother joined an enclosed order of Franciscan Sisters called the Poor Clares, in Stroud New South Wales.

Living a life of work and contemplation came easily to Mum and she lived in Community at Stroud for many years until she decided to move to England to join the Franciscan Sisters at Compton in Somerset. As with everything Mum tried, she appeared to be a natural sister and enjoyed her work with the elderly in Somerset, the prostitutes in Birmingham and the street kids in Auckland, all of whom will have benefited from her great love and caring.

Returning to Brisbane after more than a decade away she decided to work as a chaplain at the Wesley Hospital. Administering care to the dying she was also there to support their families through the grief and loss associated with death. It would be nice to have her here now.

Regardless of Noël's problems, and they were significant for her, she remained positive at all times and dealt with them with the same grace and dignity that she had shown throughout her life.

Noël died peacefully while aware that she was surrounded by those who loved her.

So, what can I say about Mum? She has been and will continue to be my role model for life. Mum managed to be so many things to so many people. That was only a few of the loving words John spoke. The family's love, indeed all our love, was evident in our celebration of her life and farewell on that day. Noël had a phrase, "I'll tuck you up my sleeve in prayer". So many of us were gently tucked up that sleeve over the years as she prayed and cared for each of us. Thank you Noël for being part of our family and a great role model as you acknowledged your calling.

Noël designed our tssf prayer cards in Qld B so think of her whenever you receive one:

Lord, Help me to live this day,
quietly, easily.
To lean upon Thy great strength
trustfully, restfully.
To wait for the unfolding of Thy will,
patiently, serenely.
To meet others
peacefully, joyously.
To face tomorrow
confidently, courageously.



Brothers and Sisters This is Your Newsletter

The Newsletter is a wonderful vehicle of communication in sharing our experiences, strengths and hopes, along with our journey in Franciscan Spirituality. You are welcomed and encouraged to submit articles for possible inclusion. **When sending articles please send unformatted material on Microsoft Word doc, and not doc x**, as this makes it easier for me to work with. **Also when sending graphics, please do not format them, as they become embedded in the text.** Thanks, I do appreciate this. I can be contacted by email on: **gloria@radiantpathways.com.au** or by phone on **07 33710265 or mobile 0412 400374**. For those without internet access, my address is: 26 Fairley Street, Indooroopilly. 4068 Qld.

May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope, and the peace of God's love at Christmas and always.

Gloria Malouf-Marsh (*Newsletter Editor*)