

THE THIRD ORDER

Australian Province Newsletter,

PNG & East Asia

Easter Edition

Dear sister or brother,

My Lenten reading this year includes a new book by retired Harvard professor of religion, James L. Kugel called *In the Valley of the Shadow: On the foundations of religious belief*. When Professor Kugel was diagnosed with a life-threatening cancer, he felt “the music stop”. It was like a silence descending on him, with all his usual activities stopped, and leaving just him the person. The stillness left him realising how small he was.



The last few months have reminded us forcefully how small human beings are. Powerful earthquakes, tsunamis, Cyclone Yasi, extensive flooding and fires have overwhelmed cities and towns. We have all felt helpless in the face of such raw power. I find I have a sick feeling of dread when I think about the power of the Christchurch quake or the Japanese tsunami.

As Tertiaries we have a wonderful structure in our Principles for responding to these disasters: prayer, study and work, our Three Ways of Service (Day 13).

We begin with prayer. That feeling of awfulness can change to awe as we recognise just how powerful God is who has cyclones and earthquakes in his hand (Psalm 95:4-5). However powerful the tsunami, our Creator God is infinitely more powerful! Praise God in the firmament of God's power! (Psalm 150:1 KJV)

We can turn with confidence to such a God with our prayers for those affected by disaster: those who have lost loved ones and livelihoods, the homeless and the frightened, emergency workers and community leaders.

Then comes study. As Franciscans, we do want to have some notion of how to understand a loving God in a hurting world. We can read whole books like *In the Valley of the Shadow*, or we can seek out

what Christian leaders are saying about the disaster. You could turn to the Archbishop of Canterbury's wise comments after the 2004 Asian tsunami at: <http://tinyurl.com/6kqvej>

We also study to prepare ourselves for 'work'. What is the most appropriate action for us to take? What, for example, is the appropriate agency for us to give money to? This will change from one situation to another. In what ways is God calling us to give generously of ourselves (Day 2)?

And so we move from prayer and study into action. At a distance we may feel limited to giving money, to offering prayers, and to sending messages. God will use what we offer. God may find more direct ways for us to help. For example, if a Tertiary in North Queensland had lost her Prayer Book, we may send one to her as an expression of our love.

The framework of prayer, study and work comes naturally to us as we read the Principles day by day. These Principles then assure us that the fruits of our actions are humility, love and joy. We offer our love to those in great need, and God consoles us with assurances that we have acted rightly.

So I warmly encourage you to respond to this sequence of disasters, to pray, study and work and offer these actions for God to bless and prosper.

Peace, joy and love

From The Minister Provincial,

By: Ted Witham tssf

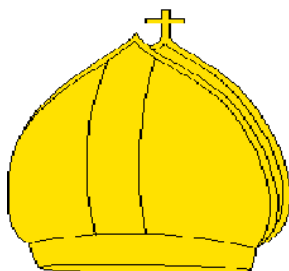
***Have a Happy
Blessed Easter***

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

BEING A BISHOP IN THE FRANCISCAN WAY

By: Rt. Rev. Godfrey Fryar

I have been a professed member of the Franciscan Third Order since 1988, and have been a Bishop for the last 12 years, first as Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and since 2003 as Bishop of Rockhampton.



The Daily Obedience is an enormous help in my ministry, and I find myself saying it at Morning Prayer in all sorts of places around the Diocese from Winton and Longreach in the west, in coal mining towns like Blackwater and Moranbah, and in my chapel at Lis Escop, the Bishop's House in Rockhampton. Often it happens in the car as Bronwyn and I have 'mobile matins' as we travel to different parts of the Diocese.

One of my predecessors, Bishop George Halford who was second bishop from 1908 to 1920 inspires me in my Franciscan calling, as he did a very Francis style of thing in his life. After 12 years, he suddenly resigned to follow through a calling that had been pressing upon him for some time, a calling to lay aside his responsibilities and privileges as bishop, to live a mendicant life amongst the men who were working on building the railways further and further into the bush in Central Queensland. As a young English priest he had been a founder of the first Bush Brotherhood in Longreach in 1897. He knew the difficulties of living in isolated places, through the hot summers, and found living with the railway workers, many of whom were young English migrants, the fulfilment of a calling from God.

He later attempted to establish a Franciscan style of Religious Life in founding The Order of Witness in the Brisbane area. Like Charles de Foucault in North Africa in the early 20th century, he failed to see his dream come true, but I believe it was ultimately fulfilled in the coming of the Society of St Francis to Brookfield in the 1960's.

As I reflect daily on the Franciscan Third Order Principles, I find much in them that resonates with God's urgent calling upon George Halford, to live

out the meaning of poverty chastity and obedience in everyday life.

As I pray in my chapel, the place where he prayed and struggled with his calling, and particularly as I sit at the prayer desk given by his clergy in thanksgiving for his ministry, I like to think that some of his spiritual life is **embedded in the timbers of the little chapel that he loved.**

From The Franciscan Readings



Maundy Thursday 9th April 2009

The ancient tradition of the Church established this day as the beginning of the Triduum where many things were celebrated on that day: the blessing of oil, the commemoration of the institution of the Eucharist, the pedilavium (washing of feet), and of

reconciliation. Later, the solemn stripping of altars and reposing the sacrament until Saturday night was included. Originally, all of this happened during the day in a continual feast. The evening liturgy has been hijacked by a misunderstanding of the role of the priesthood – it is a strengthening of the community.

(A reading from 'the Legend of St Clare')

After the Mass of the Lord's last supper, Clare shut herself in her room. She experienced the sadness of the Passion, the memory of his capture and of his mockery and she wept. So depressed, Clare went without food. A sister brought her a meal and a candle and said, "The night has gone and a day has passed – will you not eat as commanded by Francis?" to which Clare replied, "May my vision be blessed, sister, because after having desired it for so long, it has been given to me."

Lord, you reveal yourself in many ways. May we come close to you during your passion and experience something of your love to be poured out for all..

Third Order Values

By: Dr. Robert de Caen

A sermon preached at the Ballarat Anglican Cathedral 2nd March, 2011.

Text: Mark 10:45 –‘Even the Son of God came not to be served but to serve’



The direction of this address is to highlight Humility.

1. In the Gospels, the question of who is greatest amongst Jesus’ disciples raises its ugly head several times.
2. Jesus by his example from being born in a stable to dying on a criminal’s Cross, shows us what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
3. Our text ‘not to be served but to serve’ puts its finger on two important challenges in the Christian Church: a) a priest is above a deacon, a bishop is above a priest. b) that there is only one way to ‘do’ things like the Eucharist.
4. So our Roman Catholic brothers deny the validity of Anglican Orders and Sacraments. While our Quaker brethren, at the other end of the scale, believe every meal is a sacrament, and that everyone, by a faith in Jesus, is responsible for sharing the Gospel. Even in the animal kingdom, in primitive tribes, there is a pecking order.
5. But in the Christian Church, we are all servants as our Lord was, as we see when He washed His disciples’ feet..
6. Accepting responsibility is the argument for a visible pecking order. But Jesus came to emphasize that all of us have equal responsibility one for the other, through Love.
7. When Archbishop Philip Freier came to Ballarat, I asked him to mention the Third Order of St. Francis, because he and I are members. Namely that rank doesn’t count in the Franciscan Order.
8. So what does it stand for? Service, Humility and Love. We are about to receive the Blessed Sacrament, the fruit of Jesus’ crucifixion, to illustrate and teach, Service, Humility and Love. That is what matters in every Christian Denomination. For a) I am responsible for my brother and sister in

God’s world. b) This requires daily prayer, daily acts of kindness, daily telling God that we love Him, as He has shown He loves us.

The sacrament here today holds all these, in bread and wine.

May I conclude with a lovely Prayer in our Franciscan Manual:

Lord make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
Amen

Solitude

From: – Lenten Study - “Footprints of St. Francis”
By: Fr. Terry Booth & Terry Gatfield (tssf)

Both Jesus and Francis took time to provide for solitude. They did not simply let these moments happen, nor did they take time only when they felt like it. For us, time alone with God is indispensable for union with him, as Niemier (2006) concurs:

Solitude offers an opportunity for self-knowledge in a way no other experience can provide. We have the chance to expose our human nature to ourselves in the raw and how we truly are next to God. In solitude we get rid of our scaffolding: no friends to talk with, no telephone calls to make, no meetings to attend, no music to entertain, so vulnerable, weak, sinful, broken.

Nouwen, in harmony with Niemier, states:

Our solitude roots us in our own hearts.

Instead of making us yearn for company that will offer us immediate satisfaction, solitude makes us claim our center and empowers us to call others to claim theirs.

With respect to solitude, Thomas of Celano makes record that he left public places and sought places of solitude where he was often instructed by visits of the Holy Spirit.
(Armstrong et al., 2004)

“My Story”

By: Merrill Ruback

Shock! Panic! When Gloria asked me for my story.

My story is very ordinary.

My name is Merrill Ruback and I am an isolated tertiary in the Central Queensland city of Gladstone in the Diocese of Rockhampton.

I have lived in Gladstone for the past 40 years - arriving with my husband Bevan and our family in 1971. My story actually began on the 26th October 1933 when I was born in Mundubbera in Central-West Qld. I was an only child born to Rubina and Sydney Granville Jarvis. My parents were crop and dairy farmers.

My registered birth name is Merrill Elizabeth and I was baptised in a very tiny Methodist Church at Riverleigh, a farming area, just outside Mundubbera. My baptismal name is Merrill Isabelle, and thereby hangs a tale.

Needless to say I believe my Christian Journey began about 77 years ago with my baptism into the Family of God at the age of 6 months. It was Easter 1934. I now, also believe, that at that time, God planted a tiny seed in my heart - that had to be, and still has to be, nurtured/nourished until the time of ‘perfection’ whenever that may be.

I have had quite an ecumenical upbringing. My parents moved to Maryborough Qld at the beginning of WW11 and my earliest religious instruction would have been around the age of eight (8) years at the Salvation Army Sunday School. Later when we moved house I attended the Presbyterian Sunday School and Church. It was close to my home and I could ride there on my push bike. I eventually taught Sunday School, was confirmed in St Stephen’s Presbyterian Church and sang in the Church Choir. I eventually met my husband-to-be, Bevan, in 1949 and was confirmed once again in the “C of E” because that is where we were expected to be married.

I have attended church most of my life. It was the right thing to do and I always enjoyed being there. However as time went on I realised that there had to be more to being a Christian than just attending church once a week, so I began searching.

I wanted to know more and so my ‘spiritual journey’ began to accelerate. I found that the religion of the heart is much different to the religion of the mind. To know God personally is much different than just knowing ‘about Him’.

In 1987 a young priest came to our Parish of Gladstone by the name of the Rev’d Keith Slater. (Now Bishop of Grafton)

Also, through the Cursillo movement, I became very friendly with a lovely lady from Springsure, Central Queensland, Cleone Rolfe, who was a novice in the TO at that time. I attended Cleone’s profession and found it quite uplifting. Through these two people I started to become very interested in this rather strange man – St Francis of Assisi.

I had often wondered about St Francis and the stories told about him and the animals and the birds however the one thing that really took my attention was when I heard of his receiving the Stigmata. That spoke powerfully to me.

When Keith suggested I might consider becoming a tertiary in the TO, I told him I was not an academic and was not really into study. He assured me I would not have a problem - and I didn’t. I was Noviced on the 6th February 1991.

I give thanks for the encouragement of Keith, Cleone and my wonderful Novice Counsellor Barbara Desgrand. In 1993 I was professed by the Rev’d Godfrey Fryar (now Bishop of Rockhampton) who came from Brisbane, in the Sunlander train, for the occasion.

I have now been professed for 18 years and I have been an isolated tertiary for the past 17 years, when Keith and Lorraine Slater left the district and a little later Cleone also decided to relocate to Brisbane.

Of course, many tertiaries, like myself, live in isolated places and have little opportunity to meet regularly as a community, but we are no less members of this beautiful religious community. As an isolated tertiary I now find it very helpful to be able to email Franciscan brothers and sisters worldwide. This is a great help in promoting a feeling of inclusiveness.

I also give thanks for my ‘Rule of Life’.

I personally believe it is very necessary to have a ‘Rule of Life’. My desire is to grow in Christ and I know I also need the discipline and direction of

Daily Obedience in order to do this.
For me, to belong to this 'Family' within the whole Christian Family of God, is very special.
To be able to pray for each other daily, and also in times of sickness and difficulties, is powerful and it is comforting to know that this huge network of tertiaries is holding one another up in prayer.

In 2001 Bevan and I were fortunate enough to do a "Franciscan Impressions Pilgrimage through Spain, Portugal and Italy. We visited many different well-known 'religious' sights. This wonderful tour culminated at Assisi - on the Feast Day of St Francis. And what an experience of a lifetime that was. But, that's another story.
For me, St Francis, who lived the Gospel to the fullest, is a shining example of total dedication, discipline and obedience to our Lord.
On the Transitus - the passing of St Francis, his final words were:
"I have done that was mine to do: May Christ teach you what is yours to do"

Vale Patricia Brennan - 1944-2011

By: Val Tibbey

Patricia Brennan, a professed Tertiary died on 6th March 2011 following a short illness. She was a woman of great energy and vision. She imagined a different church where the ordained ministry was shared by both men and women and worked tirelessly towards this over a number of years. In 1985 Patricia was the founding President of the Movement for the Ordination of Women in Australia. This was a unique time in Australian religious history and Patricia was made a member of the Order of Australia for her services to women which she accepted on behalf of the Movement for the ordination members.

Patricia studied medicine at Sydney University and after graduation she made several working trips to Africa where aged 26 she was the only doctor within hundreds of miles and people would travel huge distances to be treated. She returned to Australia in 1971 and married Robert Brennan and together they continued missionary work in Africa. Three children were born to them, Kate, Peter and James.



In her pilgrimage of faith Patricia was drawn to Franciscanism and the Community of St. Clare at Stroud in the early 1980s, where a group of women academics and artists met with Sister Angela to worship and explore their faith in the context of the Christian Church. A strong commitment to Stroud continued and Patricia was present at the Third Order Retreat held there last October.

In taking a job as Medical Director of the Liverpool Sexual Assault Service Patricia experienced her own second wave of feminism. Again her passion and sheer will power helped her recruit doctors and begin transforming the sector and its standing within the medical world..

A packed church at St.Stephen's, Newtown farewelled and celebrated the life of Dr. Patricia Brennan on Friday, 11th March, 2011 - the farewell hymn being "Come, my way, my truth, my life"(Words: George Herbert; Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams) Concluding paragraph of her story written by her family " Her career spanned missionary physician and surgeon, general practitioner, Breast Cancer Clinician, Television Presenter, Medical Director, Forensic Consultant Physician and finally Staff Specialist. Her work now it seems, has finished, but it is the sincere and lasting wish of her family and friends that she will continue to inspire others to question and analyse the systems we inhabit and show compassion towards those suffering most greatly." Patricia trod the difficult path taken by Francis and Clare and I join with my sisters and brothers in giving thanks for her life and pray that she may rest in peace and rise in glory.

Pax et bonum

Contemplative prayer is to read with special attention to the Gospel. It is often helpful to take one sentence or word that offers special comfort and repeat it a few times so that the whole content can be brought to mind and allowed slowly to descend from the mind into the heart.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

Canterbury Tales

By: Terry Gatfield

The smell of old leather, resin, parchment and stacks of old books a joy, and a sight a more beautiful vista than a tropical island sunset. I am in seventh heaven soaked in the volumes of the library of the International Franciscan Study Centre at Canterbury. Canterbury the cobbled streets stomping-ground of Chaucer, Marlow and of late, Rowen Williams the Arch Bish'. Objective, to research and write this coming Lenten study booklet on the Footsteps of St Francis of Assisi. Task, completed.

The International Study Centre is a cauldron of Roman Catholic Franciscan Brothers and Priests gathered from the four corners of the globe. A sort of League of Nations. All shapes and colours. They come here to extend their ministry capacities through further education in religion, philosophy, and Christian theology all wrapped in a deep and rich Franciscan spirituality. Some of the Brothers are in formation studies whilst others concentrate on programs ranging from certificate level through to PhDs. There are about 15 full time staff and countless visiting scholars. They are blessed with a 60,000 volume library. The centre, built around the 70s, is set in a few acres fairly close to Canterbury Cathedral and comes replete with squirrels, foxes, hedgehogs and birds. St Francis would feel quite at home here.

But the real joy has not been the completion of the Lenten study, that has palled into insignificance. The real, and unexpected, joy was being with the Franciscan Brothers in this most delightful place and fellowshiping with this most unusual group of beautiful people. They represent a wonderful mêlée of Franciscan Brothers and Sisters and Priests plus a smattering of lay people and odd bods like myself. There is no hierarchy. People here serve each other and they serve the world. As you enter the gates the competitive individualistic commercial materialistic world is left largely behind and you enter a place where your life somehow gets subsumed in the oneness with each other in Christ following in his footprints.

I have been made welcomed, encouraged and blessed as one of their very own family and me a scruffy Aussie Anglican without a robe, status, title,

importance or significance. They practice, as St Francis, did that the term Brothers are not about office, titles, privilege but about care, support, encouragement, service and agape love.

My ten days with the Brothers and Sisters have been an unexpected gift given by God. If you are in Canterbury in the future pay them a visit and soak up some of their spirit of hospitality – it is a wonderful treasure to sample and enjoy.

SISTER MICHAELA DAVIS CSCJ

By: Ted Witham

Sister Michaela from the Community of St Clare, our Second Order, died in Freeland near Oxford in the UK on 19 December 2010. She kept in contact with her roots in Western Australia until the end.



Merle Davis had raised a family in Perth and became one of the first Australians to heed the call of Sister Angela to build a new sort of Clare community at Stroud in NSW. Sister Michaela, as she became, was one of the extraordinary women who toiled to make the mud-bricks and fashion them into the beautiful, if eccentric, monastery.

Last year she commented, “Alison Francis and myself are the only two sisters who went through the building of the mud brick monastery at Stroud left in the community. I sometimes wonder how we survived! But I still miss that lovely place.”

During the time that she was at Stroud, Michaela befriended NSW Tertiaries and other friends of the Monastery and developed a ministry of quiet presence and deep listening.

Michaela’s vision of community grew to be more traditional than Sister Angela’s, so in the early nineteen-eighties, Michaela requested a transfer to the convent at Freeland, where she remained for the rest of her life. She reported often that she was much happier and in the right place; the one to which she had been called.

Sister Michaela was a skilled and sensitive poet. She had 17 poems in *An Anthology of Christian Verse* published in 1983 by Rigby in Adelaide and edited by Francis Byrne of New Norcia.

“Song Magic”, from the collection *Shafts of Light*, printed in 2009, shows something of her Poor Clare spirit:

SONG MAGIC

By: Sister Michaela Davis

I sing a magic in my heart
and the quiet earth beneath my feet
trembles with life. I am part
of all that, living, grows – and meet
my song in a budding rose.

The path I walk flows silently
like an ancient river in its bed
journeying to find the sea
where identity and form are shed.
Destiny is still unknown.

But the land calls, binding me
with the call and calling to bind.
Earth’s mystery, finding me
a willing acolyte, enchants my mind
and candles each compelling rite.

From budding rose to dormant seed
from Milky Way to day’s first light
from bee to joyous bird, my need
is met, and glows a bright
and singing magic in my heart.

***That which is Christ-like
within us shall be crucified.
It shall suffer and be broken.
And that which is Christ-like
within us shall rise up.
It shall love and create.***

Leunig

Interpreting Francis and Clare of Assisi From The Middle Ages to The Present

Constant J Mews & Claire Renkin

Broughton Publishing

ISBN 9780-9806634-6-4 Paper Back

An Excerpt

By: Gloria Malouf-Marsh

I have been invited to write a book review about “Interpreting St Francis & St Clare of Assisi – From The Middle Ages To The Present”, on a perspective coming from a Tertiary.



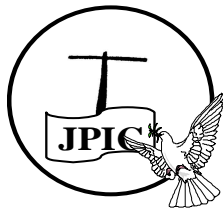
Speaking from a Tertiary’s point of view, The Society of St Francis teaches us to keep the focus of Francis in our lives. The Daily Obedience and the Rule of Life go hand in hand. The principles are a system which shape the blossoming

of our ministry. As we repeat the Principles, it becomes evident how to apply them in our daily affairs. Answers and solutions come willingly, the ego is tamed, acceptance and peace settles in. I constantly grow with Francis and Clare in the understanding of our deep love for Jesus – allowing His Divine will to guide me without struggle. This is where we call on gospel poverty. Turning our will over to the care of God as we understand Him. With this in mind, we learn to be true “disciples’ of Jesus.

I recommend this book for those seeking God’s calling, especially in the Franciscan Order, particularly novices and tertiaries. I found this exercise soul inspiring and my attitude in humility changed in approaching my journey and my calling with commitment, and deep love for Jesus.



JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY of CREATION (JPIC)



Greetings from the JPIC
Commission,

Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami

We, in Australia and then New Zealand, have just been seen what Nature can unleash upon us fragile humans. The spirit of Community showed as we phoned, emailed and doubled checked to ensure that our Franciscan Family was safe.

To try to envisage what has just happened in Japan is difficult. We have seen visions on the computer and TV but our senses have been numbed by the media. It was not until I was speaking to my Sister, who is Japanese, that I myself felt the grief of knowing that some of these people had 15 minutes warning. 15 minutes to try to save their family. Then to see a wall of water 26 feet (approx) coming towards them: the horror, the grief.

But we of the Franciscan Family can reach out our Prayers, Love and Support just as we did in Australia and New Zealand. Many years ago, when I was in hospital for an extended period, I personally felt the peace of knowing that my Franciscan Family was praying for my well-being. Those in Australia and New Zealand have also felt our Love and Supportive Prayer. As you are praying for those in Japan and the toll both on humans and the Earth, please remember your Japanese Franciscan Family.

Below is an email from a member of the Franciscan Third Order in Japan and a reply from Franciscan International, Bangkok:

From: Br. Joseph Yamada, SFO
Sent: 12 March 2011 09:45
Subject: THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN

***To treat every human being as a
shrine of God is to fulfill all religion.
Hazrat Inayat Khan***

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Dominus det tibi pacem (May the Lord give you peace). Thank you for the concern and inquiries about the safety of our Secular Franciscan fraternity members as well as the priests and staff of the Franciscan Chapel Center in Tokyo, Japan. Fortunately Tokyo was spared from damages. Though I cannot reach all the fraternity members because all the domestic telephone circuits, both landlines and cellular phones, have been crowded extremely since yesterday afternoon, they are certainly safe. Last night I was able to talk to Lolita de Leon, Administrative Assistant of the Franciscan Chapel Center over the phone. FCC building is intact and the priests, Fr. Russell, Fr. Donnon and Fr. Bede, and lay staff are all safe. Certainly lay staff stayed overnight at the chapel center because all public transportations in Tokyo, including trains, subways and buses, suspended their operations last night to check possible damages along their traveling routes.

Immediately after the sunrise this morning, central, prefectural and municipal governments, police forces, fire brigades and armed forces started damage evaluation and rescue operation. Yesterday's earthquake was the largest one that Japan has ever experienced in her history. However, the earthquake and its aftershocks did not cause massive damages. Tsunami or tidal waves following the earthquake literally devastated northern prefectures. Several cities and towns, located along the coastline of the Pacific Ocean, disappeared totally. Two petrochemical complexes have exploded and are still burning like inferno. One nuclear power reactor might melt down unless it is cooled down quickly. Probably thousands of people were killed by Tsunami. We still do not know an overall picture of the damages.

More than fifty countries have offered to send their rescue teams to Japan and the US Forces in Japan are already in relief operation. Thanks to your kindness and generosity extended to us. However, it is no longer rescue operation but a waste disposal work to remove the mountains of rubbles left by Tsunami and find dead bodies in them. Japan has spent billions of money to put natural disasters under control. Preparedness is important and necessary but the latest earthquake and tsunami have reminded us that human being is powerless in front of nature.

My house, a typical Japanese house made of wood, soil and paper, was slightly damaged and my wife Emma was frightened very much but, thanks to God, we are fine very much despite continual aftershocks.

With fraternal greetings in Jesus Christ and St. Francis of Assisi.
Br. Joseph, your little servant

Dear Sisters and Brothers in St. Francis and St. Clare,

As I am transiting through Indonesia, the powerful earthquake and the tsunami that struck Japan have been constantly on the news. Our thoughts, feelings, emotions and prayers turn to the people of Japan and their families which have been impacted by these natural disasters. We grieve with you for the loss of lives, property and, for some, hope to see again their loved ones.

However, we do not lose faith and courage: we wish to convey to our Franciscan Family in Japan that Franciscans International are standing by you in prayer and readiness to be of help in our modest capacity. Our regional office in Bangkok is ready to convey any appeal for help on your part to the wide, committed and welcoming network of Franciscan Families throughout Asia and the Pacific. We are also well connected to international organisations which deal with post-disaster emergency operations and can channel any information you may want to pass on behalf of the Franciscan community in Japan and the people to whom you minister.

We would appreciate your letting us know how we can be of help. I also copy some of our Franciscans in AP for their information.

We stand with you united in prayer. Please do not wait to get in touch with us.

Peace and all good,

Mateusz Tuniewicz
Regional Director – Asia Pacific
Franciscans International
Bangkok Thailand

From Glenys McCarrick – JPIC leader

Child Trafficking

I have just been hearing of the increase in Child Trafficking in Asia and the work of the people who try to save these children. How some governments lock away anyone who is lucky enough to escape and other governments don't acknowledge that it is happening to them at all. Please pray for the mindset that the children are better off than they were at home and the tourists who take advantage of this system. I have a friend who was raped as a child and she now, as a young woman, has no control of her bladder function. The abuse ranges from the small child being torn sexually by the large male to the child being used in the fields to harvest the crop.

What can we do? We can be alert. We can be courageous enough to speak out. Please pray for the work and personal safety the people who work to free some of these young children from their captures.

It is after disasters such as this one in Japan that we need to especially pray for the safety of the children as they are found and reunited with their family or given a safe alternate.

Franciscans International

The training is still in the planning process. Details will be forwarded as soon as possible.

Sanjay, from Bangkok's FI office, has forwarded one of the UN reports on Australia's Universal Periodic Review. The internet link is http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/A_HRC_WG-6_10_AUS_3_E.pdf

Your special Prayer Points

I have just personally met an isolated Tertiary, an Enquirer, Lance, who lives in Bangkok and is an incredible source of knowledge on many issues in Asia.

I wanted to share the beautiful gift he gave me but I have had problems scanning it. We had been talking about Dennis' book Franciscan Gold and the early history of our Third Order. Lance gave me photos of his Prayer Points: A board displaying, amongst other items, a map of Australia; a photo of his Son's grave; and certain people and issues that have touched his life.

He wrote 'Prayer points are anything that comes up from our lives, lives of others, their concerns, their celebrations. Prayers are Franciscan Gold in the making. Our lives, hopes, failures, all combined.' Where is God directing your Prayer Points? OBSERVE, CONTEMPLATE, ACT
tssf JPIC Commission

A Spiritual Advance at Stroud

By: Rev. Phillip Thirlwell

Our sister, Pirrial Clift tssf, was "placed" with Episcopal blessing, with prayers and joyful praise in the context of an exciting Eucharist, in her new life as a contemplative priest at the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Stroud, on Sunday 6th March.



The chapel was filled, with a shoulder to shoulder congregation, and filled with vibrant singing.

Pirrial has recently retired from being the rector of the nearby parish of Dungog. She has responded to a perceived call from God to become a contemplative and pastoral presence at the monastery, which had been the home of the Community of St Clare while those sisters were in Australia.

It is set in timbered hill country, near the historic village of Stroud, founded in 1831, some 80k north of Newcastle.

She will reside in a section of the mud-brick monastery, maintain a pattern of daily prayer and eucharist, and be available to minister to individuals and groups who come on Retreat. She will be self-supporting.

Among the packed congregation were tertiaries from the Newcastle and Sydney fellowships; other people from both dioceses, especially the parishes of Dungog and Stroud; and the First Order brothers of the neighbouring Hermitage of St Bernadine of Siena.

In the liturgy of her placement, the Bishop of Newcastle asked:

"Why have you come to this lonely place?"

Pirrial replied: "I hear a whispered invitation in my heart, to come away and be alone with God, where there is quiet and stillness."

The Bishop asked: "What are your intentions?"

Pirrial replied: "to live as a hermit, following the Principles and Rule of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis, immersing myself in the rhythm of the fourfold office and listening for God's voice in the silence."

The Bishop said: "The solitary spiritual life is a perilous one, and many who attempt it come to grief through loneliness and temptations. What support do you have?"

Pirrial replied: "Jesus Christ who called me here will guard and protect me. I have the love and generous support of my children and grandchildren to sustain me. The Brothers of the First Order of the Society of St Francis are a source of strength; the Third Order of the Society of St Francis and the Friends of the Monastery Stroud support this venture. My Spiritual Director counsels and guides me, and my friends pick me up when I fall."

The Eucharist was celebrated by the Bishop. It was encased in hymns of faith and joy, including St Patrick's Breastplate, and the lively Teach Me to Dance., with tertiaries contributing music on violin and flute.

May God bless this new ministry and development at the Monastery – and also his servant Pirrial. Let us keep Pirrial in our prayers.

From The Editor

Lent is a time for reflection and contemplation. A time to journey with the Lord in the wilderness. To listen to the silence within and empty our minds and hearts and focus on the Passion of Our Lord. During this silence and solitude, we become truly human and we discover our brokenness and weaknesses.



Thanks to you all who have contributed articles for the Easter Edition.

The next Newsletter is due for publication at Pentecost.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Holy Easter.

Pax et bonum

Gloria Malouf-Marsh

(Newsletter Editor)