

THE THIRD ORDER

Australian Province Newsletter,

PNG & East Asia

Pentecost

Dear sisters and brothers,

The sentence on Easter day reminds us that, **'this is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it'**. On Sunday and each day we are reminded not only of Christ's sacrifice for us but of his rising again to continually guide and lead us through the power of the **Holy Spirit** to be instruments of action, peace and joy in the world.

Saint Francis set an example for each of us, one which led to his simple consistency in penance, prayer, alms, purity, and charity.

Francis wrote:

'Furthermore, let us produce worthy fruits of penance. Let us also love our neighbours as ourselves. Let us have charity and humility. Let us give alms because these cleanse our souls from the stains of sin. We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh. Rather we must be simple, humble and pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead, we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God's sake. The **Spirit of the Lord** will rest on all who live in this way and persevere in it to the end. He will permanently dwell in them. **They will be the Father's children who do his work.** They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

The 'Prayer of St Francis' or peace prayer is significant as we approach **Pentecost**. We are all familiar with it and no doubt use it in our prayer life on regular occasions. **'Lord make us instruments of your peace**concluding with... **It is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life'**. The prayer calls us through the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit, [as the Spirit filled Francis], to be changed, transformed as God's instruments.



Day one of our prayer cycle – The Object: reminds us of God's call to us to be reborn as his servants following in his way and in his word. Jesus said, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain: but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'this is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah: 11 1-3: a green shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump, from his roots a budding branch. The life giving Spirit of God will hover over him, the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding, The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength, the Spirit that instills knowledge and fear of God. Fear of God will be all his joy and delight. The Message.

For each of us, as we journey in faith with our Father Francis, the revelation that alone we are nothing but in the power of the **Holy Spirit**, freely bestowed on each of us, we are God's instruments enabling us, despite our human frailties, to be changed as voices for all who have need in this our troubled world.

Heather McDougall, in her book, **Francis of Assisi: a saint for our times** wrote: St Francis offers a vision of a different world, where we can share more equally the abundant wealth of goods and life as we focus on the right relations to the earth and all our fellow creatures.

The symbol of the dove in relation to the coming of the Holy Spirit is a significant one for our Franciscan calling. St Francis showed us that love for human kind, the earth and all creatures were paramount in our journey of faith. In the earliest Christian art of our brothers and sisters, the Spirit is a dove of peace descending into our lives to bring to us the presence of God's gift of love and peace and to enable each one of us to be fully fulfilled in our humanity.

Colin [Provincial Minister]

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

Being Bridges...

By: Margaret Holt

Being 'bridges' between people and God, making Jesus known and loved, sounds a daunting task especially if we spend a lot of time thinking about the techniques and theology of how to go about doing this. Jesus told us "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." (John 5:19). Jesus simply imitated his Father. He knew what was in the Father's heart because he had that heart within him. Br. Francis followed that same example. He was never one for books, theology and technique anyway. He simply did what he saw his beloved Lord doing. He imitated Jesus because he had the heart and the spirit of Jesus within him.

Jesus touched the lives of those on the fringes of society; those who weren't 'religious' or those who weren't 'acceptable' to the mainstream society that he lived in. He loved them, he reached out to them and he offered them life – abundant and eternal. The Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well was not only a different ethnic group but one whom the Jews hated and yet Jesus spoke to her – a Samaritan and a woman (much to the surprise of both the woman and the disciples!). She was also morally questionable living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus knew all these things and yet without hesitation he offered her the gift of 'living water' – eternal life. Jesus came to save the world not to condemn it (John 3:17).

The brothers of Francis often despaired of the men whom Francis allowed to join them and come in to the community of brothers. Many of them seemed unsuitable but Francis welcomed them all.

The challenge is for us to imitate our Lord and our brother Francis. With my work as a midwife and nurse in a regional hospital and among refugees I am often privileged to care for and assist people who often feel isolated and 'on the edge of society.' I was caring for a mother and her new baby son recently. They were from East Asia and Muslim. I was touched by the words of the young father who thanked a couple of us with these words; "you do not see the colour of our skins. You treat us like members of your family... please pray for us." I was amazed that we had made such a difference for them. We don't realise

sometimes how much we can reflect God's love and touch a person's life simply with a smile, with gentleness, caring and respect. We have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of refugees from different ethnic and religious groups, of those on the fringes of society and those considered 'less respectable.'

We pray to have the heart and spirit of Jesus within us, as Francis did, leading us to be bridges between the love of God our Father and all those around us as we live our lives day by day.



**At this time of Pentecost,
May God's breath stream within you.
May God's breath renew you.
May God's breath invigorate you.
Walk with confidence into this day.**

—traditional Jewish blessing

Third Order Conference and General Chapter 12 - 15 July 2012

Trinity College, Parkville, Melbourne

Speakers:

Michael Yore, Director of Mission and Justice,
Good Shepherd Australia & NZ

Andrew McGowan, theological lecturer and
Warden of Trinity College

Mick Pope, lecturer in meteorology with BOM,
ISCAST fellow and lay preacher
Bible Studies with Alan Cadwallader



Strong Christian beliefs guide Francis Foundation director Joan Grace in her work, helping with mental health issues.

A guiding hand through the mental health maze

Mental Health

By: ALEX SINNOTT

26 Jan, 2012 04:00 AM

THEY say God helps those who help themselves but countless mental health patients have been leant a hand by Joan Grace.

The Francis Foundation director was thrilled to receive an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) but quick to point out her work could not be fulfilled without support from volunteers.

Mrs Grace helped to establish the Francis Foundation three decades ago to assist people with mental health issues back into mainstream society.

Since 1981, more than 300 people have been assisted by the not-for-profit organisation.

Mrs Grace told The Standard she was hopeful her award would work in some way to de-stigmatise psychological issues.

She said the organisation had been run by a loyal team of volunteers during its 30 years of existence.

"I've lived by the motto 'there but for the grace of God go I' — it's a phrase that has great significance for me," the 75-year-old said.

"Everyone involved in the foundation has witnessed how much of a difference our services make to people who have been through the mental health system.

"We are not-for-profit and we don't rely on government handouts.

"Yes, in many ways we have saved the

taxpayer but that isn't why we do what we do."

Mrs Grace started her career as a bank teller in Melbourne and Deniliquin. After moving to Warrnambool with her young family, she became involved in voluntary work at the now-closed Brierly Hospital.

A dedicated Christian, Mrs Grace has been an ecclesiastic assistant at St John's Anglican Church in Port Fairy since 1993 and a Guild of Transfiguration member for the past two decades.

She named the foundation after Saint Francis of Assisi following a life-long admiration for the martyr's work.

"The Francis Foundation came about in the early 1980s when I regularly visited Brierly with my then husband as part of a local Christian group," Mrs Grace said.

"We saw that there was a distinct need for the services we now provide. Many mental health patients needed some guidance and care after their initial treatment but there wasn't anyone providing that service.

"I think people are growing to understand the work we do and hopefully the stigma around mental health is reduced once people gain greater knowledge on the issue."

The OAM comes after other public recognition for Mrs Grace's life work, including being named Warrnambool Business Awards volunteer of the year and gaining the Member of Parliament's Award for volunteering.

***"Gaze upon Him,
consider Him,
contemplate Him,
as you desire to
imitate Him."***

-St. Clare of Assisi

A Franciscan Story,

Meeting of Melbourne Third Order Members,

Bishopscourt, 18 February 2012

By: The Most Reverend Philip Freier tssf

I'm not sure of the exact year, it was probably 1973, that I came across the 'Everyman's Library' compilation of 'the Little Flowers of Saint Francis' 'The Mirror of Perfection' and St Bonaventure's 'Life of St Francis'. Reading this book opened a window into Christian mysticism in a way that was refreshing and new to me. Certainly it was different to my experience of the Church. Francis, so alive to the presence of God and eager to live by the most literal reception of Jesus' teachings came alive to me in a way that was different to anything else that I had known about Christianity. I was also at that time in my late teenage years reading books that were broadly in the area of Eastern religion. Like many other people of my generation in those days I had a general and universalist sense of religion and the equivalence of their respective claims.

Leaving Brisbane and taking up my first teaching appointment on Thursday Island exposed me to a vital world of Melanesian Christianity. Joy and I married and went to Kowanyama an Aboriginal community in Western Cape York and following the lead of Joy's clear Christian commitment became involved in the worship life of the Church of the Ascension, the Anglican Church there. The Archdeacon of Cape York then was Archdeacon Tony Matthews, a name known to many of you through his long involvement as a tertiary. He used to visit Kowanyama and stay overnight or have meals with us.

This was now 1977. Joy and I had been to New Zealand for our honeymoon and amongst other souvenirs had brought back a small leather wall hanging that had a saying attributed to Mahatma Gandhi. I don't recall the actual words on it but their effect was to assert the comparability and equivalence of all religions, that all were God given and no one religion was to be believed ahead of the others. On one of his visits Tony noticed the wall hanging and asked me the simple question, 'Did I believe those words to be true?' His question penetrated me deeply, much more than he knew at the time, and I was sure that the answer to that question was one I needed to confront.

The outcome was that I soon became sure that I didn't hold the position that those words

described, I became sure that God wanted me to be an intentional follower of Jesus to the exclusion of all other paths and possibilities. At the time I drew inspiration from Francis and his decision to embrace a life of radical discipleship. We moved closer to Cairns in 1979 and into Cairns itself in 1980 which gave me exposure to the little group of Tertiaries. Following a call to test a vocation to ordained ministry Joy and I sold up in Cairns at the end of 1980 and moved to St John's College, Morpeth in New South Wales. John Brooker was one of the students who was in my year and through his introduction over the three years at Morpeth I got to know a number of the Sydney tertiaries and became an inquirer myself about becoming a tertiary. I recall attending a Third Order retreat at Kincumber led by Brother Bill Lash and being impressed by his faithfulness and simplicity.

Going back to Kowanyama for my ordination to the diaconate opened up during my third year of studies primarily through the insistence of the call Joy and I felt to work with Aboriginal people and Archdeacon Tony's persistence at the Diocese of Carpentaria and that I should return there and be released from my obligations as a Newcastle ordinand. Novicing and profession as a tertiary followed. Later moving to Brisbane and then Bundaberg there were opportunities for fellowship with other tertiaries attending retreats and shared worship with the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscans. Later in the Northern Territory I was back in the situation I had started out in Kowanyama days without the presence of other tertiaries in the same location. Despite the difference of circumstance the community of prayer and friendship continued as it does here in Melbourne.

Meeting and praying with other bishops who are tertiaries has been a blessing, Bishop Godfrey Fryar and Bishop Keith Slater in Australia, Archbishops Desmond Tutu and Joe Kopapa outside of this country come to mind.

I am grateful to the Franciscan movement for the pattern of nearer discipleship with Jesus and the encouragement to daily prayer and intercession.

***“There are those
who give with joy,
and that joy is
their reward.”***

By: Khalil Gibran



Front row from left to right, seated on chairs or on the floor: Eric Kluukeri, Val Butler, Janet Down, Sandra Jackson, Chris Winkett, Catherine de Ron, Rob de Caen, Daphne Edwardson, Pauline Weston
Back row from left to right, standing: Philip Freier, Michael Down, Colin Valentine, Helen Granowski, Denis Woodbridge, Sue Chapman with Jeremy Ashton behind her, Joy Bartlett, Pam Kisbee, John Davis



**Special News Regarding
 Our Franciscan Family**

***Congratulations and
 Blessings to those
 Professed or Noviced***

Dawn Punter and David McAvenna
 Rosylyn Craig and Gemma Le Mesurier

Tim Narraway, recently noviced

May The Lord, Our Brother Francis and
 The Holy Spirit guide them on their special
 ministry.

“Spirit,” JESUS THE TEACHER WITHIN
A selection from Laurence Freeman OSB,
(New York: Continuum, 2000),
pp. 186 87.

The joy of realizing the truth is the bliss of the Spirit. It erases the shame of all previous failures. Aware that this Spirit of truth is with us as a friend, we are better able to tolerate in others and in ourselves what has not yet reached fullness of being. . . Truth is tolerant because the Spirit is forgiving love. It allows the untrue to survive for the time being as a loving parent allows a child to make mistakes. Truth embraces rather than excommunicates its enemies. It is made manifest after much distillation of experience. It is not an object or an answer to be stared at and preserved. [And] when there is no ego through which the truth has to pass, communication dilates into communion.

The Spirit is the egolessness, the boundless emptiness, of God. She therefore fills everything with her emptiness and contains “all the truth.” Only emptiness can contain everything. Returning to us in the Spirit of truth, as friend and teacher, Jesus can therefore be both God and man, historical and cosmic, personal and universal. He is wave and particle, fully individuated, able to be his unique individual self and to be indivisible from everything. This makes his death, all death, meaningful and necessary. In St John’s gospel, the Resurrection and the sending of the Spirit are seen as a single event. On the evening of Easter Day Jesus came and stood among the disciples while they were huddled fearfully in a locked room. His first word to them was shalom. The rich Hebrew word for peace invoked the blessing of the harmony of all orders of being. Shalom flows directly from the Divine harmony which is the Spirit. To receive it is to share in that peace beyond all understanding. Jesus then breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

His breath, which carried his words into their minds and listening hearts, is a medium of the Spirit. Then he gave them the power to forgive sins. This power to forgive. . . is a charism of the Spirit because forgiveness removes the greatest of all obstacles to communication. It heals wounds, confesses the truth that sets us free, consoles pain, calms anger, dissolves resentment, achieves the reconciliation of enemies.



Whoever knows the truth has the power to forgive. . . We learn through her effect on ourselves what the Spirit is: a friend who has no favorites and who liberates the power to love, to forgive endlessly. She is beyond observation but we recognize her by the traces of her silent, guiding, healing, consoling passage through our lives.

Come Spirit of God

By: Sr Clare SFO

Breath of the Spirit
Winds of change

Come Spirit of God
Touch my heart

Power of the Spirit
Purifying fire

Come Spirit of God
Inflame me with love

Spirit of peace
New way to live

Come Spirit of God
Teach me Your way

Holy Sacred Spirit
Breathing life into creation

Come Spirit of God
Breathe Your life in me.

Spirituality of SFF

By: Rev Robert de Caen

For me our greatest confidence that we are ‘followers’ of Francis, and followers of Jesus, is summed up in our Reading for the 28th day of the Principles of the Rule:

Tertiaries, rejoicing in the Lord always, show in our lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. We remember that we follow the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was a friend to tax collectors and sinners and who sat at the tables of both rich and the poor. We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God’s world its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean. WE mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring joy into the live of others. WE carry within us an inner peace and happiness which others, may perceive, even if they do not know its source.

Indeed, Joy should be self-evident in the life of ever true Lover of Jesus. For we are thereby fulfilling the purpose of God, namely, “To love God with all our hearts”.

However difficult we may find some people, to live with, however burdened we feel by pain in our bodies; however saddened something has made us; because we lay it before our Wonderful God with complete trust, we can triumph over them all. That is what Francis did, and why we are members of SSf.

But how do we build up to this? We are told in the New Testament of Jesus’ teaching, that one of his illustrations to highlight the whole principle of faith and trust, was a man who found a treasure in a field: he went home, sold everything he had and bought the field. In a way, we invite people who want to become members of our Third Order, that belonging requires absolute dedication to our Principle of Rule. Or as day 3 of our Daily Reading puts it: “the same path (as Jesus) of renunciation and sacrifice”.

One amongst other reasons which Christians fail to reach the goal of Joy, and why we reach something near it, is precisely by making a disciplined effort; we set our feet on a course to ‘follow His example’ by focusing on our ‘Three Aims’; on our The ways of service, and on the Three Notes of the Order, regardless of whether Franciscans belong to the First, Second or Third Order.

Clarity of personal intention is remembered every month; we search ourselves by looking again and again at our Three Aims, so as to sharpen our life’s focus.

Let us consider briefly what we do aim at. I like the phrasing in the fellowship of Contemplative Prayer February study, that our task is ‘to be of use in Gods’ mission of loving salvation, fit for His purposes of love in Creation’. So our first Aim as Tertiaries is ‘to make our Lord known and loved everywhere.’ Equally the second Aim is to spread the spirit of love and harmony’. Notice the repeated word Love, with the link to ‘the purposes of love in Creation’. This means that at the very center of God and His purpose in creating you and me, is to share His Nature: Love.

So as to highlight this the Third Aim is ‘to live simply’. We then don’t get wrongly focused on objects of pleasure, but enjoy things as leading us, and freeing us, to focus on God and His Love.

That is very beautiful, and it intensifies our awareness of what Life is all about: Loving God, each other, and as our Savior put it ‘loving ourselves’ as beautiful recipients of God, There is no need of inner make-up; the loveliness is already within us.

Now God sent Jesus, His Son, to show us by His Life, how to ingest, how to fill our minds and spirits with his Love. Again this requires three disciplines: Prayer, Study and Work. This as Franciscans we call Service. Regular, systematic daily tasks, hone us Spiritually and Mentally to be of service to our Maker.

Alas, church-going doesn’t do much of this. We make a further effort to show naturally the three beautiful notes in our lives: Humility, Love and Joy. There we are back where we started: Joy. This is a natural gift given us by the Holy Spirit. It is from Him, not manufactured by us. So we accept it with Humility. for there we are experiencing first hand Gods’ Love.

This is rightly summed up in the last words of our Principles: “The purpose of Christ is to work miracles through people who are willing to be emptied of self and to surrender to Him. We then become channels of Grace through who His mighty work is done”.

I loved this dual vision: you and I as Tertiaries becoming, all unconsciously channels, uncluttered by pride, selfishness, and greed.. All that is washed away in our Lord’s sacrificial blood. And again the Holy Spirit pours into us and from us Grace. I love that word, and pray constantly that it makes me a beautiful person for our Beloved God. What a gift the Third Order of St. Francis is to the Church, our world, and ourselves. That a lovely reality: a gift, truly, personally.

An Eloquent Bridge

By David Chambers

In May 1963 a visitor came to the door of our flat in the Finbar Gate of St. Augustine's College Canterbury. He introduced himself as Bruce McCall - "on my way to Wangaratta". After a moment's hesitation I replied, "you have a long way to go, do you intend walking?" We both understood Oz humour. He explained that as the bishop-elect he was preparing for his consecration, and could I spare some time to show him around the College and talk about its role in the Anglican Communion. He was 'doing Canterbury' in a day, so time was limited. During our conversation I mentioned that Audrey, Jonathan and I were leaving in a few weeks to caravan on the Continent. His immediate reply was "Make sure you visit Assisi and Taize. These two places inspired me more than the Cathedrals and tourist attractions. They speak of renewal not nostalgia." His enthusiasm inspired us - a bridge into a new adventure.

We sited our caravan above Assisi near the old fort, looking over the town and the Perugian valley. The most memorable feature was a eucharist and lunch at The Chittadella de Christiana where 60 men and women worshipped and ate together. Most of them were professed religious. There were special guest tables and an English-speaking host accompanied us to a table set for four where a little Australian flag stood at its centre. Within a few years they changed their name to, A Company of Christians instead The Christian Citadel, in order to demonstrate their outward look. However their original charter with which they were commissioned by Pope John XXIII in 1958 has not altered and reflects much of Francis own concepts. 1. To be open to strangers. 2. To pool their gifts in the Community. (as tertiary educated religious they have great wealth of art, literature, intellect and capital) 3. To be available for mission. (no monastic walls). 4. Cogender. Equal opportunity for women and men with separate houses but worshipping and eating together. 5. Disseminating the Gospel to Italians in their setting of Italian culture. (not establishing an empire of new houses in other countries - when enquiries come from other countries their standard reply is, "you must commence it yourselves with local people speaking your language and growing up in your culture"). These main principles are still in place which

sets them apart from other Franciscan orders. My Franciscan journey had begun with this bridge extended to me - away from the bird-bath.

FABC Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences OHD OFFICE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1451 P. GUEVARRA STREET, STA. CRUZ,
MANILA 1014, PHILIPPINES



EASTER MESSAGE

Your Eminence/Grace/Excellency

Dear Father/Brother/Sister,
On behalf of the FABC Office of Human Development, we wish you a very Happy Easter. May the Risen Jesus strengthen us to hope in building a society filled with His Justice and His Peace!

Our faith in resurrection is an experience grounded in our historical context. Confronted by exploitation, injustice, oppression, repression, and violence, a growing number of people are being pushed to the margins of the world. They are forced to live in abject poverty, with a constant feeling of insecurity – be it in their country of birth or elsewhere as migrants. It appears as though the forces of death have the winning edge. It is against this backdrop, a right understanding of resurrection gains significance.

One who believes in resurrection cannot be daunted by the prevailing human problems: great social sins, all kinds of violence, extreme economic inequalities, destruction to our planet, and serious injustices of all kinds. As a team we are dedicated to respond to the demanding cry of the Social Doctrine of the Church for the poorest of the poor, especially the Migrants, Indigenous Peoples, the struggles of women and children, the concerns of Climate Change etc. We request your special prayers in this humble endeavor.

May you have an enabling and empowering Easter!

Your brother,
Nithiya ofm.cap

Gallipoli 2010

By: Chris Barfoot

Excerpt from Tau Lent Newsletter 2010



“Anzac day, where to from here?”

White stones in the sun;
Endless names on monuments,
Some missing, never found.
From corners of the earth they came:
Tony, Mehmet, Andre, Raj –
Eighteen, nineteen years old.



For Empire called them
Named them heroes;
Enemies they were,
In national cause.
Their quarrel now forgotten,
They lie together.

Raised on distant farms,
Taranaki or Anatolia,
Sons for whom a mother yearned,
Schoolmates, brothers, cousins,
Loved by sweethearts
But never to marriage came.



No boundaries here
And lowered is the flag;
No more the booming guns,
The shouts, the dust, the thirst.
The ground for which they strove
Now is the host to all.

Did they in lonely hour
Before they fell
Think again of home?
In this hell on earth
Did they feel the love
Which wombed and held them.



Kindle not upon their deaths
The fire in which they died.
Strive not to divide them
Friend from foe,
Nor build new empires
On their mingled blood.

But let them be remembered;
Let every nation weep;
Dry not up the well of tears
Which flow from all our hearts,
For in this place God grieves
And covers all.



Franciscan & Holy Days To Note

May' 12	16	Margaret of Cortona
May' 12	20	Bernardine of Sienna
June' 12	13	Anthony of Padua
July '12	15	Bonaventure
Aug' 12	4	John Vianney, Cure d' Ars
Aug' 12	11	CLARE OF ASSISI
Aug' 12	14	Maximillian Kolbe
Aug' 12	15	MARY, THE MOTHER OF THE LORD
Aug' 12	25	Louis, King of France
Sept' 12	17	STIGMATA OF FRANCIS
Oct' 12	3	Transitus
Oct' 12	4	FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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

QUEENSLAND

AREA B RETREAT

WHEN: 2-4 OCTOBER, 2012

VENUE:

**THE BROOKFIELD CENTRE
OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY,
BROOKFIELD. QLD.**

For Information Contact: Francis Peloe,
Phone: 07 33596287
Email: fpeloe@bigpond.com

St Teresa of Avila

(16th century)

Let nothing disturb thee;
Let nothing dismay thee;
All things pass:
God never changes.
Patience attains
All that it strives for.
He who has God
Lacks for nothing:
God alone suffices.

A TRUE Modern-Day FRANCISCAN STORY

By: Lee Steele

Franciscan A knew of a single mum moving house and offered to help pack up the day before the proposed move. When A arrived at the house on a Friday morning, she quickly realised there was a catastrophe happening..... not a sign of any packing, and a house in complete chaos. Dirty crockery and cutlery throughout the house, the kitchen benches couldn't be seen for dirty dishes, children's bedroom floors completely covered in dirty clothes, wardrobes spilling out with toys and clothes, 2 large dogs running wild, etc etc. A couldn't see how this family could possibly move tomorrow.

A had to meet a friend for lunch – a university lecturer who had retired that week. At the end of the lunch, the friend announced she was going home to 'do nothing' and was not enjoying her first week of retirement. So A asked a special favour.... could the friend (whom she has known for some 20 years) spare just ONE HOUR to help with some washing up so then A could start packing the kitchen up? To which the friend (of some 20 years) replied "No. I won't help. If that mother has got herself into such a pickle, then I am certainly not going to help her get out of her pickle. And besides that, I don't want to damage my nails washing up AND I don't think you should damage your nails washing up either, and besides all that, I'm not really dressed for washing up".

So.

A said, no problem, and headed back to the Chaotic House to start the job of washing up, and then packing up. That same night, A attended a Franciscan gathering at Carcoar. Having asked her husband to take a trailer to the Chaotic House tomorrow to help move, and also a friend who had a ute – as the single Mum had planned to borrow a trailer and move the whole house herself – she then timidly said to Bathurst Franciscan B - who has helped moved many a single mum in distress – "By any chance, do you expect to be in Bathurst tomorrow", as the Franciscan lived about half an hour away. To which Franciscan B replied "Yes, as a matter of fact I will be there around 10am, WHAT CAN I DO?" No Questions asked, no Judgements made. At this stage, A had not even mentioned the situation she was concerned about.

So, next morning, our Franciscan turned up at 10am with a huge trailer, and his wife, and we worked solidly all day and the next to get the family moved from the Chaotic House into their new home. At midday, the Franciscan's wife said "Is anyone hungry", to which of course, the answer was a resounding yes. So she opened up her esky and provided salad rolls, fresh home cooked muffins and cool drinks.

Passing through the garage, A found the single mum in tears. Fearing we had maybe overwhelmed her with people and trailers and organisational skills, A soon learnt that she was indeed overwhelmed, but rather at the sheer generosity of people whom she had never met. She said she had never in her life come across such unconditional generosity.

Sadly, for Bathurst, the kind Franciscan B and his wife have left the district and they will be sorely missed. This was an example of the true spirit of St Francis. As for A's friend of some 20 years who went home that afternoon, she is still unhappy with retirement. I have a feeling that if she had found it in herself to GIVE that Friday afternoon, maybe... just maybe.... she would have been a happier person, even though her nail polish may have been damaged.

It is a privilege to be a Franciscan – to quietly help those in need. I often ask myself whether it is in fact selfish to be a Franciscan, as although we all worked hard on the Chaotic House move, we also had a lot of laughs and a lot of fun together. My conclusion is that it can be a positive outcome for all parties involved.



The Life of the World to Come

Excerpt from “Francis of Assisi,
Writer and Spiritual Master”
By: Thaddee Matura, O.F.M.

Your kingdom come:

That you may rule in us through Your grace
And enable us *to come* to *Your kingdom*
Where there is clear vision of You,
Perfect love of You,
Blessed companionship with you,
Eternal enjoyment of You.

- *Prayer Inspired by Our Father*

Already in this life, the Christian who “perseveres in the true faith and in conversion,” becomes the dwelling place and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The latter, finding his resting place in Christians, introduces them into the communion of the Father and the Son. Thus, having become themselves, sons of the Father, spouse, brother and sister of Jesus, they truly “become participants of the divine nature.” But this experience, which is the mystical summit of the Christian life, is lived out in the day-by-day obscurity of faith. Threatened by numerous obstacles, it runs the risk of being forgotten and becoming commonplace.

Even today, Francis writes, the Father “dwells in the heavens, that is to say with the angels and the saints”; he is for them the light, love, beatitude. In cheerfulness, they fully enjoy something of his being which is “sovereign, eternal good, from whom all good comes, without whom there is no good.” This full enjoyment is accessible only in the heavenly realm; for us, it is to come when in his glorious return, Christ will say to all those who have known the Father, adored Him and served Him in penance: “Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.”

God is “delightful and totally desirable above all else” but Francis knows that this “delightfulness” is not continuous, but rather fluctuating and temporary: He prays so that purified, illumined and set ablaze by the fire of the Spirit, we can access to it in this life and, following in the footsteps of Christ, to finally attain the Father, the Most High, and share in his life, his kingdom and glory. Only then will God be seen as he is, loved as he is. Access to the Trinitarian communion will plunge us into the abysses of eternal happiness.

Men and women will understand then what it means “to be saved by his mercy alone.” The Paradise of the delights of God, where he has placed them since the beginning and from which they have been in exile as the result of sin, will be re-opened. After having endured in peace, sicknesses, anxiety, weariness, they can enter this Paradise to receive the crown of life. For Francis, the happiness of the world to come consists essentially in the vision and the love of the One who is “wisdom, humility, beauty, conviviality, joy and gladness” and this in the joyful company of the throng of those who are saved. Faced with such a destiny conceived and prepared by “the One who has loved us with a holy love, created us according to his image and likeness, has given us our body, soul, life, had redeemed us and will save us by his mercy alone,” what can men and women do but sing:

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are *the praises,*
the glory and the honor,
and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High,
do they belong
And no human is worthy
to mention Your name.

- *Canticle of the Creatures*

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***“We have been called to
heal wounds, to unite
what has fallen apart,
and to bring home those
who have lost their way.”***

- St. Francis of Assisi



The Seven 'I am' sayings of Jesus from the Gospel of John

Jesus said 'I am' on seven occasions. Each 'I am' is a description Jesus gave of Himself and is recorded in John's Gospel. The Seven 'I am' sayings help us better understand the divinity of Jesus Christ.

- 1. Bread** *"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."* John 6:35
- 2. Light** *"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."* John 8:12
- 3. Gate** *"I am the gate; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."* John 10:9
- 4. Good Shepherd** *"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep."* John 10:11
- 5. Resurrection and Life** *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies."* John 11:25
- 6. Way, Truth, Life** *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."* John 14:6
- 7. True vine** *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."* John 15:1

The divinity of Jesus Christ is further illustrated in John 8:58. Jesus said, "Truly, Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am", which means that Jesus existed before His human life on earth.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our hearts take up thy rest;
Come with thy grace and heavenly aid
To fill the hearts which thou hast made;
To fill the hearts which thou hast made.

O Comforter, to thee we cry,
Thou heavenly gift of God most high;
Thou font of life and fire of love,
And sweet anointing from above;
And sweet anointing from above.

Praise be to thee, Father and Son,
And Holy Spirit, with them one;
And may the Son on us bestow
The gifts that from the Spirit flow;
The gifts that from the Spirit flow.

By: Louis Lambillotte
(19th century)

From The Editor



I would like to thank all those who contributed articles for the Pentecost Edition.

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.

Our next Newsletter is the Stigmata/Francistide.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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