

THE THIRD ORDER

Australian Province Newsletter,

PNG & East Asia

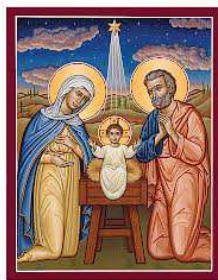
Advent



Edition

AN ADVENT ANTHEM

By: Revd Helen Granowski tssf
(Provincial Chaplain TSSF,
Australia, PNG and East Asia.)



Advent has arrived, with its sense of excitement and expectation. We look forward to the year ahead. Exams are over, the Parish Meeting has come and gone without too much agro. Our cards and gifts are underway and we look forward to the Season of Christmas, where once again we can glory with the shepherds as they come to adore the Christ-child, God truly incarnate.

Is this how you are experiencing Advent? If so I should imagine you are wearing blinkers with plugs in your ears. Or perhaps you have already gone on holiday, to keep away from the frenetic city with its cry of “Buy, Buy, Buy!” and the insistent shrilling of Rudolf and Jingle Bells in the Supermarkets.

It doesn't seem so bad on the other side of the world. Perhaps because the holiday period is not so long, or perhaps one is suffering from Carol Singing in the sleety streets and is now nursing a head cold!

Perhaps it helps if we focus on Christmas as a special time for children. It was Jesus who turned his disciples' attention to the little children. Indeed the increased popularity of children's carol services and community events would encourage this approach. But Jesus said more: “Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” (Mark 10:15)

How can we receive God's kingdom in a childlike way with all the hype of the festive season impinging on our senses.

Perhaps before we feel it is all too hard and the only answer would be a Retreat or Quiet day - impossible at this stage of the year - we just need to stop for a few moments. Take a break and feel what it was like to be a little child.

There is a photo of myself hanging in my front hall, as a two—or-three year old, by a famous child photographer in the '30s. I am standing under our Christmas tree. On my face is an expression of wonder and delight, of rapture - almost of contemplation. I remember the sights and sounds of those days, the joy of throwing stones into a half-filled clay pit. I was sucking gum leaves, listening to frogs at dusk, cicada's at noon, feeling the sun on my skin and the sand between my toes. Deep down I knew who I was and who made me.

I would urge you to come apart a while. While you are shopping or coming home from work you may be able to pop into a church. All the better if it is cool and dark. Just enjoy the silence and the sense of peace. Or sit for a few minutes under a shady tree in a park. Just be who you are and be aware of to whom you belong - yourself and God. Feel God embracing your child-self.

We then need to see with the fresh eyes of a child. We need to forget our immediate agendas, just for the moment. Trying to abide in that moment.

My favourite account of Jesus healing a blind person is found in Mark 8:22ff. Jesus had anointed the eyes of the blind man and had laid his hands on him, asking him what he could see. The man looked up and said, “I can see people, but they look like trees walking.” So Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again and the man “looked intently” and his sight was restored.

In the email Meditation that arrived today from Franciscan Richard Rohr, Fr Rohr suggests that we need to teach people how to see. Life is all about learning how to see God everywhere through “the humility of not knowing”. We need to allow God to break through.

This may require letting go of our fear, anger and limitations. Finding our own littleness. It is not easy for grown-ups to receive God's love as a free gift. It often will need patience and practice. But when the scales do fall from our eyes the world will look fresher and brighter and we will see things in a new and different way.

When I was on the staff of Holy Trinity Kew, parishioners encouraged me to hold weekly lunchtime Meditation sessions during the four weeks of Advent. We called the series, "Coming apart in the Christmas rush", the main theme being, "Be still and know that I am God". Geraldine McFarlane, poet and writer, contributed a poem to set the scene. She died last year and her husband has given permission for the poem to be included in this Newsletter- see page 9.

My blessings to you all as you approach the Holy Season.



ORO, ORO – WELCOME WELCOME:

reflections on my visit to the Popondetta Diocese, PNG
- October 2012

Dear sisters and brothers

As Provincial of the Third Order, Society of St Francis : Australia, PNG and East Asia I have cause to reflect this Advent as we all prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and to look back on the year past. I wish you all every Blessing as you celebrate with your families and friends once again the coming of our Lord Jesus.

One year has passed since my commissioning to the ministry of Provincial in our order and it has been one eventful year as I have travelled and met many of our brothers and sisters. The most significant adventure and experience that has changed my life has been my visit to the people of Popondetta. The Anglican Church is present in the Provinces of Dogura and Oro/ Popondetta. Both are found on the North Eastern coast of PNG. It is these 2 Provinces that we as an Order have over 100 tertiaries and novices. It was at their call and invitation that Bishop Tony Hall- Matthews [Assistant Provincial re PNG] and I travelled to the Province of Popondetta .

From the arrival at the Popondetta Airport until my departure I experienced and learned much from our brothers and sisters. We were based in the village of Agenehambo and the welcome we received not only from the Franciscans but also the whole village congregation was a welcome never to be forgotten. In the time we spent with these wonderful people they called out to us each day, "Oro, Oro..." The advent of our coming to be with them was experienced in the daily provision and free will offering of our food, our comfort and safety.

My first encounter with the villagers was a traditional welcome, with children singing a song of greeting and both Tony and I receiving leis of frangipani.

The feast that followed was in honour of our presence concluding with many speeches of welcome. The PNG people love to 'make talk'. Sunday was the feast of St Michael of all Angels. It was here that I witnessed great joy in worship, in song, prayer and offering. Tony preached a great sermon on Michael and the Angels and the congregation in Agenehambo gave all that they could give for God's kingdom to grow and flourish including large bunches of Taro from their gardens. Our brothers and sisters from other villages came to our Convocation the next day. Many walked for many hours to our Franciscan gathering to share and grow in understanding Franciscan spirituality. Once again I experienced and witnessed their eagerness to learn and share as Christians and Franciscans following the principles of our father Francis. Creation was the main theme in relation to the 3 aims of our Order interposed with the 3 notes of humility, love and joy. I thank them all for their willingness to speak freely and share with me in our faith journey.

It was during this time that Harold [who worked tirelessly to provide and support us] had a fall from the steps of our house. This eventually led to us seeking medical help for Harold in Popondetta and unfortunately forgoing our journey in the dinghy to Dogura.

However in discussion with Harold we are assured that a special mission journey with a team from Agenehambo / Haruru ; Harold, Jean, Rita, Harry and Gibland will travel in the dinghy to visit our brothers and sisters in the Dogura Diocese. I look forward to their report at our next Chapter.

On October 4th, St Francis day, we travelled to Haruro to the friary to celebrate the festival and to witness the profession of two young novices. We were again welcomed warmly and worshipped with a huge and joyful congregation as we celebrated this great Saint who came to understand that he like each of us is called to step out and witness to our community daily and wherever we may be. God called Francis and each of us to build his church.

Our brothers and sisters in PNG, many of whom are subsistent farmers with little or no income have within them enthusiasm and courage to witness for Christ. I thank God for their witness to me in the time I shared with them. I look forward to my return.

Colin tssf
Provincial

"He who works with his hands is a laborer.

He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman.

He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist."

By: St Francis of Assisi



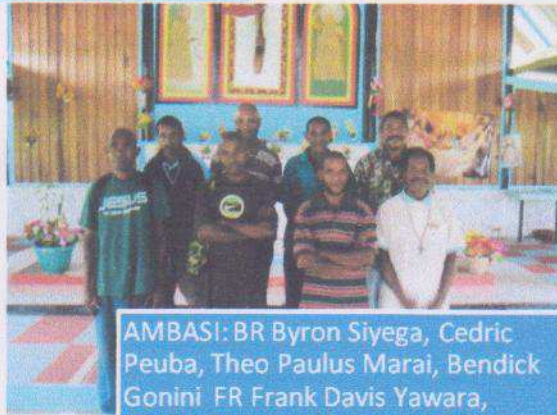
AGENHAMBO: Deacon, Samuel Horata, Dicksaford Kavo, Selby Kavo, Rufus Kivaga, Harry Kivaja. FR: Jean Isemba, Gibland Arahua, Olivia Arahua, Rhoda Sevenapa, Ismael Porengi, Millicent Kivaja



TOGAHO: Ethel Biga, Caswell Kogoropa, Charlotte Paisa, Cecil Kamamu



HARURU: Rita Simeni

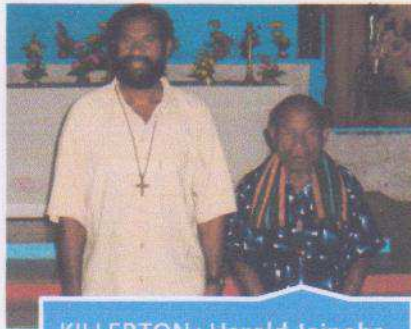


AMBASI: BR Byron Siyega, Cedric Peuba, Theo Paulus Marai, Bendick Gonini FR Frank Davis Yawara, Romney Peuba, Fred Gill Kokora, Gordon Natapo

SANGARA:
John Douglas Hevari



NEWTON COLLEGE : Barbra and Fr. Leonard Jinga



KILLERTON : Harold Joinoba, Timothy Jiregara



FAREWELL FROM POPONDETTA



Meeting the Leper



From: "Francis THE JOURNEY and the DREAM,
By: Fr Murray Bodo - Page 21

FRANCIS REMEMBERED THE FIRST VICTORY OF
HIS NEW HEART.

All his life long he had panicked when he met a person with leprosy. And then one day on the road below Assisi, he did one of those surprising things that only the power of Jesus' Spirit could explain. He reached out and touched such a one, the very sight of whom nauseated him. He felt his knees playing tricks on him, and he was afraid he would not make it to the leper standing humbly before him. Trembling, he threw his arms around the leper's neck and kissed his cheek.

Then, like the feeling he remembered when he first began to walk, he was happy and confident; he stood erect and calm and loved this man in his arms. He wanted to hold him tighter but that would only be to satisfy himself now; and he was afraid to lose this new found freedom. He dropped his arms and smiled, and the man's eyes twinkled back their recognition that Francis had received more than he had given. In the silence of their gazing, neither man dropped his eyes. And Francis marveled that a leper's eyes were hypnotically beautiful.

Renewing Vows Due

Please send Reports
To your
Regional Ministers



Eager Hands Stole Made from Reverend Elaine Jeston in August, 2012

By: Fleur Forsyth

This stole was designed around a recurring theme in discussions with Elaine. It started with her dream of hands (used in a poster) and continued with the prayer of St. Teresa of Avilla, and culminated in reading Proverbs 31:13 - "She selects work and flax, and works with eager hands". God was sending a message that I was so slow to recognize. On the morning, understanding dawned, I had a prep class at St Clare of Assisi and we traced their hands as part of a religion class. These hands feature on "Eager Hands" just as they were traced.

Hands feature heavily in Bible verses and many of these suit Elaine:

Job 19:21 - "The hand of God has touched me!"

Ecclesiastes 9:10 - "Whatever your hand finds to do"

Acts 13:11 - "The hand of the Lord is upon you"

Psalms 24:4 - "He who has clean hands and a pure heart"

Proverbs 13:20 - "She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy"

I met Elaine at St. Matthews and the cross on the back of the stole was inspired by the cross features on the wall behind the altar. This stole is given with love to Elaine who has Eager Hands to do God's will.



ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

What is the role of angels in the life of an Anglican Christian?

Interview with The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Rowell
Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe.

In common with all Christians who use formal liturgies, every time Anglicans celebrate the Eucharist they are reminded in the words of the Eucharistic prayer that their prayer and praise are joined “with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, as they echo the words of the sanctus, the angelic song of heaven. At Christmas, popular hymns and carols take up the theme of the angelic annunciation of the incarnation to Mary, and the praise of the angels rejoicing in the birth of Christ. “Hark the herald angels sing!” and “It came upon the midnight clear” are two obvious examples. Christian poets such as George Herbert and Thomas Traherne in the seventeenth century have a lively sense of the power and protection of angels, and in more recent times angels feature in both the Christian apologetic and imaginative writing of C.S. Lewis.

In England and Wales there are 324 churches dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels, and the feast of Michaelmas is a major festival both in the Book of Common Prayer and in more recent liturgical revision. In the prayers of Compline, or Night Prayer, as the blessing of God is invoked upon the place where the office has been prayed, the presence of God’s holy angels is asked that “we may be preserved in peace.” Similar prayers would be used at the blessing of houses or the dedication of churches.

In countless stained glass windows in traditional parish churches, angels, and especially St. Michael the archangel, are depicted as guardians and protectors, and they are also depicted on many war memorials and in dramatic sculptures such as that of St. Michael at Coventry Cathedral.

Sorrowing or guardian angels are characteristic of many nineteenth century memorials in cemeteries and churchyards. There are also splendid examples of painted or carved church roofs and vaults, in which angels remind congregations of the worship of heaven. Imaginative depictions of angels are often characteristic themes of modern church art and textiles.

Despite the influence of “demythologizing” in some academic theology, which would dismiss angels as the symbolic language of a past age, more recent times have seen a renewed sense of angels as agents of God’s grace and goodness, and as protecting powers against the forces of evil. In the wider Anglican Communion, many Anglican churches in the developing world, especially in Africa, have a lively awareness of angels as guides, guardians, and protectors.



Community Obedience Mobile App

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For those of you who own either iPhones/iPads or Android smart phones or tablets please be advised that we now have the Community Obedience prayers available for IOS and Android powered devices.

If you would like a copy please send an email directly to Gordon Hooker QLD B region email:

gordonhooker@bigpond.com to request access to the application.

You will need to provide the following information:

email address,
your name,
device type (android or apple
iphone/ipad).

Blessings, Gordon

Advent Anthems

Excerpts from:

www.scifac.ru.ac.za/cathedral/spire/dec09/advent.htm

You'll find them on page 68 in your Prayer Books, to which please now turn (* page 20 in the South African Prayer Book).*

The Advent Anthems are also known as the Greater Antiphons or as the **O-Antiphons**. There are Seven Anthems in all, one for each of the seven days preceding Christmas Eve (i.e. **17th-23rd December**), and they are to be said or sung before and after the Magnificat (The Song of Mary) at Evening Prayer.

The name is derived from the initial 'O': namely, **O Sapientia** (O Wisdom), **O Adonai** (O Lord of Lords), **O Radix Jesse** (O Root of Jesse), **O Clavis David** (O Key of David), **O Oriens** (O Morning Star), **O Rex Gentium** (O King of the nations), and O Emmanuel. The Advent hymn, O come, O come Emmanuel, is in fact a metrical version of some of the Anthems - there are only five verses (English Hymnal eight). These Anthems were originally sung antiphonally, alternately by one side of the choir and then the other. The authorship and date of composition of the Anthems/Antiphons is unknown, but they were already in use by the **8th century**.

Sometimes Advent is relegated to a kind of 'getting ready for Christmas' time, but it is really intended to be a time of preparation of our hearts for the Second Coming of Jesus the Christ. The great themes of Advent are the 'last things' (heaven, hell, death and judgement) and the fulfilment of God's purpose. It is in part a somber season, but it is also a time full of joyful hope, as conveyed by the words of the refrain of the Advent hymn: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

It is on HOPE that we should dwell. However bleak the world around or the daily circumstances of our lives, however frail our own faith or weak our understanding of God's ways, the promise of God still holds. God has not abandoned his creation, nor has he turned his back on his people. Just as, long ago, he sent his son - who spoke of the love and patience of God; so one day he will send him again - this time as the eternal Son of God, majestic in power, to usher in the Kingdom of God in its fullness. God is indeed working his purpose out as year succeeds to year. **He is not helpless or insensitive to our needs. He is planning for us in love. With God, nothing is ever hopeless.** This is a great Advent truth brought home to us by the Anthems. Most of us have moments of insecurity and fear, when we feel the need of some source of comfort and reassurance beyond ourselves. In Jesus we find a true security, a safe 'peg' if you like, on which to hang our anxieties.

So it is incumbent upon us that we do what is good (what God requires) and oppose what is evil, having before us always the standards laid down for us by God. We see God's model displayed for us best in Jesus, in the words and teaching of the Gospels, and we shall see it again when he comes as judge, for he will come with great authority. **It is Jesus who unlocks the very gates of heaven that you and I may be guided to enter in.**

During the days of Advent take some time to read and then to think about the message of The Advent Anthems.



Magi's Gifts and Symbolism

Magi's Gifts and Symbolism

Gold—King - The gift of gold has always been symbolic of wealth and royalty, and was an appropriate gift to honor a king. Since the Christ child was also the Son of God and the King of Kings (Rev. 17:14) gold was a fitting gift for the Magi to offer the Lord Jesus as they worshipped him.

Frankincense—Priest - Frankincense was highly valued in Israel as incense and a perfume (Song of Songs 3:6; 4:6). Made from the dried resin of Boswellia trees, the first mention of frankincense in the Bible is found in God's instructions for the priestly services of the tabernacle (Exodus 30:23-34).

Myrrh—Prophet - The third and final gift of the Magi is myrrh, a valuable gum resin which oozes from gashes cut in the bark of the Commiphora tree. Its first mention in the Bible would suggest that the definitive use for myrrh was in the holy anointing oil. Myrrh was also used in the embalming and anointing of the dead, and came to represent mortality, suffering, and sorrow. The Magi's gift of myrrh signifies Christ's mortality, his Passion, and his roles as Prophet, the Great Physician, and Suffering Saviour

Prophet, Priest, & King

"The Magi had surely read Moses' promise of the coming Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), as well as David's promise of the coming Priest (Psalm 110:4), and Daniel's promise of the coming King (Daniel 9:24-27). When they saw Him, they fell down and worshipped Him, presenting Him with the three most fitting gifts of worship which the world contained."

*O Star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy Perfect Light*

**ADVENT and
CHRISTMAS
WISDOM**

Henri J. M. Nouwen

Epigraph

THE ADVENT JOURNEY is an invitation to climb the mountain of the Lord. The journey consists of a slow, gradual ascending up the mountain path. As with all uphill climbing, there are certain dangers along the way, but also the joy-ful expectation of one day reaching the mountain-top that is the house of the Lord.

Br Victor Antoine D'AVILA-LATOURETTE

In the Midst of Our Dark World

I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God's saving power...Our temptation is to be distracted by them...When I have no eyes for the small signs of God's presence—the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends—I will always remain tempted to despair.

The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, *he* asks for my full attention. The work of our salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises.

By: Henri J. M. Nouwen,

GRACIAS! A LATIN AMERICAN JOURNAL

ADVENT ACTION

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

HIDDEN HOPE

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.

and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

ISAIAH 11:1-3

PRAYER

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

Amen.



Silence

Silence is my friend tonight,
As I close my eyes, I realise,
The stillness within me
Is my companion and my light!

It gladdens my heart to be
At peace with my Creator;
Saying my prayers
Asking for this and that;
He is my benefactor!

I do wonder sometimes what God
Thinks of my little chats;
With Him no deal will He make
To satisfy my ego's sake!

He lulls me to sleep;
Knowing no mountain
Is too steep for Him;
God holds me forever safe
In His keep!

Breathing freely,
Sighing deeply;
Sweet slumber beckons me
As I fall asleep!

By: Sandra R. Saad

Ephesians 5:19-20

“speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

A Franciscan Monkey named Rodela

By: Terry Gatfield

Each year I teach a Business course at the Asian Theological Seminary in the Philippines. Simply summarised: It is a Joy! In all ways it provides me with new understanding and a fresh appreciation for life, charging my internal batteries. I am spiritually refreshed as I listen to the experiences of my students who engage in creative Christian frontier mission; they expend sacrificial energy in bringing hope, meaning and purpose to millions living in cities and regions; they are servants to the vast population of the urban poor and marginalised. Poverty is not just a factor of their economic state – but of the physical, social and spiritual domain. Yet, there is the paradox! Their joy in poverty of the marginalised teaches others especially me. It is always most disturbing for me to hear their stories – and this year has proved no exception.

At the end of my teaching I try to factor in a visit to some Christian field ministry. This year it was to Lilok Farm (pronounced Lee-lock): it is a retreat and educational centre situated a couple of hours south-east of the crowded hustle and bustle of the polluted city of Manila. Lilok Farm is near the township of Tenay (pronounced Tan-eye) and in Tagalog it means 'to mould or transform', is strongly connected to the Servants Ministry. Those engaged in Servants are dedicated to working in the most difficult areas of world where poverty saturates humanity, reaching down to the very lowest limits of society, to the regions of the squatters, slum-dwellers and sorters of plastic and garbage on the rat-infested rubbish tips. Servants and their families live among the poor and identify with them in their needs and bringing with them hope, light, healing, life and dignity. It is an incarnational ministry and not one for the faint-hearted, squeamish or those addicted to consumerism and their comfort zone.

However, Lilok Farm is not situated in the slums: it is located within the mountains where the air is fresh and pure - although economic, social, health and educational deprivation are always neighbours wherever you are in the Philippines. The Farm, started in 2007, comes from the loins of the Lilok Training Centre situated in Metro Manila, which focuses on skilling workers and pastors to reach the urban poor. Originally the Farm was a retreat space but it has now become an important training farm focusing on ecology and biblical stewardship. Lilok Farm demonstrates and teaches small-scale tropical sustainable living principles and ecological agricultural practices. This is placed alongside its traditional hospitality ministry, which it does well.

The early days of the Farm were rudimentary. Workers and guests were housed under canvas with no permanent water or loos. This did not dampen demand. By 2009 an extensive new building program was considered essential and a new complex was designed to incorporate a large

sleeping facilities for 30 people, guest accommodation, a large kitchen, dining facilities, toilets, team workers accommodation and housing for two Filipino families to be permanent carers of the land. It was financed by deep pocket donations mainly from mum-and-dad supporters in various countries, plus a nice bonus cheque from the Swiss Government. All is now completed but work continues in restoring the land to its former glory.

Lilok Farm now echoes the music of creation. The buildings are constructed on Filipino classical native design using traditional natural and local timbers and methods. Only moderate concessions are made to incorporate modern materials. Much of the raw material has been sourced from their own land. Water is collected from the roofs, electricity from the sun, water is recycled, toilets are of the composting type and the worm farm adds an additional blessing. Chickens and turkeys are free range and all agricultural products are grown on Permacultural principles. Health, life, energy and dignity are gradually returning to the land after many a season of very poor management. Dignity is respected and passed on.

The Farm is a feast to the eyes. The mountain slope has been terraced and dry stone walls travel the contours of the land in every possible direction. Stone paths have been carved and sculptured into the landscape, connecting buildings but sometimes going nowhere at all. The paths are devoid of straight lines – they are more like an uncurled labyrinth. The three-dimensional movement of the body and eye as you walk along the pathways gives the sensation of having 'one too many' glasses of wine.

However the DNA of Lilok Farm is not drawn primary from its natural environment, location or its built environment but it is birthed and formed in the personal values of its managers. The founders, architects and managers (they have personally chastised me using the term manager – that is not Servant language) are Rachel Hauser and Joshua Palma. Rachel hails from Switzerland and has worked in the Servant Ministry at the frontier for some 17 years. She has classical Swiss features – a dream for the expressionist artist - who is highly energised and appears to be able to bounce multiple balls in the air: whilst hosting a banquet she could write an annual report and simultaneously entertaining her guests. She is pregnant and with her partner Joshua who is a Filipino has had many years of experience working at the infamous Smoky Mountain with the urban poor. Yet, by contrast, Joshua is more of a contemplate, the Nathanael who Jesus found under the tree, a man who has no guile. He is gentle, gracious, a great listener and a non-interventionist. For those reasons it is tempting not to give full weight to his incredible organisational, teaching and management skills. This duo has been responsible for Lilok's design, construction, project management and supervision plus its continuing development. Together in a spirit of prayer, commitment, servanthood and joy they give it life, energy, meaning and immense beauty.

Oh I almost forgot a very important member of the family – Rodela the monkey. She is a native of the local forest and lives at their house. She is of a Franciscan kind. I have spent a number of mornings with her and found her to be a wonderful listener, one filled with wisdom and understanding. During my time there she has acted as my spiritual director and soul mate. When you come to visit Lilok Farm – all are welcome - do spend some time with her; renewal and blessings are guaranteed.

PS I spent only three days at Lilok and it felt like a three month vacation – my spiritual batteries are now fully recharged.

Coming apart in the Christmas rush.

Geraldine McFarlane. Kew 1995.

*Get out of the traffic, get out of the heat,
Come away from the gaudy street,
Rest awhile in the quiet church
And come apart in the Christmas rush.*

*Forget the panic; forget the dread
Of Christmas decisions, of Christmas greed;
The fear that your gathering family
Will squabble under the Christmas tree.*

*Forget the tinsel; forget the till,
Piped-out carols, banal, shrill,
Christmas cards with robins and snow,
Reindeer and Santa and YO HO HO.*

*Forget the traditional winter scene,
Holly and ivy and evergreen.
Summer is here; the gardens are bright
With flowers of blue and yellow and white.*

*Honeycomb gold in the silky oak,
A white wool shawl on the paper bark,
Vivid blue is all around us -
Jacaranda, agapanthus -*

*So beautiful it lifts the heart.
Leave your troubles and come apart.
Be calm, be quiet, be reassured,
“Be still and know that I am God”.*

**THIS PRAYER WAS SENT TO ME BY
MERRIL RUBACK FOR MY PRAYER DAY**

I was sent this “Litany for Life” by our friend and sister in St Francis - Bronwyn Fryar of Rockhampton. It is just ever, ever, so slightly altered from the original.

In faith let us pray to the Lord:

Dear Lord,
For your limitless love which is the means of grace and the hope of heaven - we praise you.
For creation’s beauty surrounding us every day, dear Lord, - we praise you.
For your constant companionship on our pilgrim journey, - we thank you, Lord.
For the love and understanding of family and friends, - we thank you, Lord.
When we have failed to love you with our whole heart, - Lord have mercy.
When we fail to love others as you love us, - Lord have mercy.
For those who live in fear of their lives because of war or want, - Lord, hear our prayer.
For those on our hearts who are frail, sick or house-bound, - Lord hear our prayer.

Prayer And The Spiritual Journey

What you hold, may you (always) hold,
What you do, may you (always) do and never abandon.
But with swift pace, light step,
Unswerving feet,
So that even your steps stir up no dust,
May you go forward
Securely, joyfully, and swiftly,
On the path of prudent happiness,
Not believing anything,
Not agreeing with anything
That would dissuade you from this resolution
Or that would place a stumbling block for you on the way,
So that you may offer your vows to the Most High
In the pursuit of that perfection
To which the spirit of the Lord has called you.

- Clare of Assisi,
“The Second Letter to Agnes of Prague”

“Lighten our Darkness”

By: Rev. Dr. Robert DeCaen

A recent short article in the Adelaide Advertiser highlighted a letter of Einstein, sold in London, for over two million dollars, wherein he dismissed the idea of God.

It caused me to consider that some of the world’s historically greatest thinkers have ‘made the same mistake’, namely that their brilliant thoughts into mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, even politics, offered them the right to give seemingly concrete opinions on matters outside their realm of expertise.

Thus, Socrates, Leonardo Da Vince, and Einstein, could debate in matters of faith.

Equally Adolf Hitler, and Stalin, could have convinced themselves that they know best for the human race, and God’s plan for world control.

Alas, brilliance in one’s field of thought needs to accept its own limitations, it can read constantly to adapt, change, even accept ones mistakes. Otherwise it can become ‘the blind leading the blind.’

Authoropology is the study of mankind’s search for the meaning of life. It is a highly technical, in-depth appraisal, calling for rarified insight.

So next to indulge in the dismissal of the Bible as primitive legends, reflects on the arrogance and blindness of Einstein.

Saint Francis of Assisi was not deeply educated, though his father was very wealthy.

Yet God uses Francis to bring insight into the world about Himself. For ‘God uses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise’ !!

Indeed we do say about someone that is being criticized “I know that person: they are nothing like what you think.”

The Cord: a Franciscan spiritual review.

Franciscan Institute Publications.

St Bonaventure University:

NY, 14778.

email: dmitchel@sbu.edu

The Magazine “Franciscan”

The Provincial Treasurer, Geoff Jordan, advises that due to substantial increases in U.K. postage rates, there has been a consequential rise in subscription rates for the magazine “*franciscan*”

For contributors in Australia, the 2013 subscription will be \$28[Aust] for 3 issues posted to your home address.

However, a new alternative is also being offered. For \$14[Aust] you can receive the “EVersion” of the magazine, which is an electronic or online version. The Treasurer has viewed a sample of the “EVersion” and advises that the high quality production we have grown used to in the printed version has been maintained in the online version.

You can subscribe to the magazine at any time by contacting Geoff [geoff_fayjordan@bigpond.com]. However, most Tertiaries renew their subscription when paying their annual subs. A provision is made on the subs invoice for intending subscribers to complete.

Anglicare’s latest State of the Family Report, When There’s Not Enough To Eat, has now been released.

It examines the level of food security for families seeking assistance at emergency services. The report is available at [Anglicare](#)

or the link:

http://www.anglicare.asn.au/site/sotf12_notenoughtoeat.php



Faith in Hope

By: Father John Candy (James Cook University)

Do you believe in Santa Claus?
How about the Easter Bunny?
Maybe even The Tooth Fairy?

Children do. They have tremendous, unquestioning faith. If they are told that Santa exists, they will believe, and their belief will be reinforced year after year by the presents under the tree. In the case of the Easter Bunny, the eggs in a basket every year are the reinforcement. Where the Tooth Fairy is concerned, that dollar appearing mysteriously under the pillow, replacing the lost tooth, will reinforce belief.

Even when they are old enough to suspect that the person who ate the cookies and milk on Christmas Eve was really dear old Dad or Mum, they are reluctant not to believe for fear that the presents may stop appearing. In their developing minds, they grasp for the reality of things hoped for and therefore trust in persons, or rabbits, or fairies they cannot see. That is what faith is, the surety of things hoped for, the certainty of things unseen.

To a child, faith is limited by an immature view of the world. A child cannot comprehend that the gifts hoped for and received, are really the manifestation of the love of God as shown through the love of parents. But as a child matures, his or her faith matures. In fact, for most of us faith is an ever-changing part of our psyche. As people of faith, we anticipate it will grow, and it generally does. However, that growth is not steady and all too often is limited by a finite world-view unable to totally comprehend our infinite God.

Think about St Peter's faith, which at best, wavered all over the place. In fact during Jesus' earthly ministry, St Peter not only waffled but was also rash and impetuous. Remember his confession to Jesus' question as the disciples were journeying through the countryside. "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." (Matthew 16:13-20, Mk 8:27-29; Lk 9:18-20) Jesus responds, "Blessed are you Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven." What does this mean to us? Most of us have the wavering type of faith that Peter had. That's okay as the church was built by legions of people over the centuries that have wavered around.

Thankfully we now have the lens of the Resurrection; we have the assurance of the infinite power, love, and forgiveness of our God. We know that every time we step out Jesus will be there to keep us going. So, let's take a walk together especially this Advent on the journey God is calling us to take. Let's explore the path before us, listening to our loving God as we walk together. I'm looking forward to that journey of faith in this part of God's kingdom and I invite you all to take that journey, in faith with hope in your part of God's kingdom. I invite you to come along on a journey with our God in preparation for the celebration of Emmanuel – God with us.

Reflections from Assisi

From: Revd Hilary & Paul Singleton
From Page 17



The Basilica of St Francis of Assisi



San Damiano – where Francis heard the call to rebuild the church and home of the san Damiano Cross

My Franciscan

Journey

By: Valerie Bell



My journey commenced when I was confirmed whilst at boarding school in the UK in the 50s. Our Headmistress had been a missionary in China – she took our Confirmation classes which were very encouraging – when I came top in scripture exam I was convinced I would also become a missionary!. Although I had attended church regularly (at age 4 sitting next to my grandmother without daring to breathe! – serious Methodists - and later C of E with my parents) our services at school were great – especially the singing, and those invited guest speakers for the sermons. One such has stayed in my mind all these years. He was Brother, later Father Charles, a Franciscan monk, complete with brown tunic and knotted cord, working in the impoverished, war torn East End of London after the war.

A lifetime later and having strayed far, our Vicar showed the “Brother Sun Sister Moon” DVD during Bible Study. Later some Franciscan leaflets were left in our Church – “A Life of Celebration”. The Third Order of the Society of St. Francis – asking questions like “are you yearning for a deeper relationship with God?” – I couldn’t express it better – action, contemplation, peacemaker, concerned for the poor – Yes, Yes!

So began the journey. A Retreat in Grafton was a wonderful start where St Francis’ life story was revealed by beautifully read and written readings. They so reminded me of Brother Lawrence whom we had studied during Bible Study – I was touched by his simplicity and the pleasure he got from doing simple chores like washing up (Those who know my lack of culinary ability will now understand my preference for the sink!)

Subsequently there have been two day Retreats, one in Bangalow in February 2012 and one in Ballina in June 2012 where I was ‘Noviced’ Nevertheless, on these occasions I am reluctant and shy, very conscious of my “ignorance” – not always knowing where in the prayer book I should be - I chickened out when asked to say Grace before a meal – BUT – the opportunity to listen or talk to those Tertiaries present, all of whom

are so far along their respective journeys is wonderful if a little awe-inspiring. The latest Silent Retreat at Yamba in October 2012 was – well – I’m not sure what words to use – a beautiful opportunity to collect my thoughts, concentrate my mind which has read so much lately - it is all so meaningful but difficult to live up to after such a long time in the wilderness.

Much reading since has increased my understanding of the TSSF aims and aspirations and what is expected of one. The Community Obedience has been a very good starting point for me – it keeps me very disciplined and starts my day off in the right frame of mine – it doesn’t always last the day through but when I falter, something pulls me up and reminds me “that was not very nice” or “you could have done better”.

In the past I have lived and worked on farms in the UK, worked in offices, flown aeroplanes in Oz, but have always preferred the open air, outdoor work and “grubbing in the soil” – not that I have green fingered results. So, birds, bees (except the one that stung me on being rescued from the pool!), flowers and trees, cows and calves, slugs and snails and puppy dogs tails – all I enjoy. St Francis encourages participation, caring and sharing in this wonderful world of plants, creatures and not forgetting our human family.

My journey is just beginning – about time one might say – better late than never though.

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

Christ Has No Body

**Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks
to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he
blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth
but yours.**

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me”

Matthew 11:28-30

www.rc.net/wcc/readings/matt1128.htm



28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Meditation: What does the yoke of Jesus refer to in the gospel? The Jews used the image of a yoke to express submission to God. They spoke of the yoke of the law, the yoke of the commandments, the yoke of the kingdom, the yoke of God. Jesus says his yoke is “easy”. The Greek word for “easy” can also mean “well-fitting”. Yokes were tailor-made to fit the oxen well. We are commanded to put on the “sweet yoke of Jesus” and to live the “heavenly way of life and happiness”. Jesus also says his “burden is light”. There’s a story of a man who once met a boy carrying a smaller crippled lad on his back. “That’s a heavy load you are carrying there,” exclaimed the man. “He ain’t heavy; he’s my brother!” responded the boy. No burden is too heavy when it’s given in love and carried in love. Jesus offers us a new kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. In his kingdom sins are not only forgiven but removed, and eternal life is poured out for all its citizens. This is not a political kingdom, but a spiritual one. The yoke of Christ’s kingdom, his kingly rule and way of life, liberates us from the burden of guilt and from the oppression of sin and hurtful desires. Only Jesus can lift the burden of sin and the weight of hopelessness from us. Jesus used the analogy of a yoke to explain how we can exchange the burden of sin and despair for a burden of glory and yoke of freedom from sin. The yoke which Jesus invites us to embrace, is his way of grace and freedom from the power of sin. Do you trust in God’s love and submit to his will and plan for your life?

“Lord, inflame my heart with love for you and for your ways and help me to exchange the yoke of rebellion for the yoke of submission to your holy and loving word. Set me free from the folly of my own sinful ignorance and rebellious pride that I may I wholly desire what is good and in accord with your will.”



Christmas at Greccio

Excerpt From: *“Francis THE JOURNEY and the DREAM”*

By: Murray Bodo - page 131

SOMEONE TO LOVE, SOMEONE TO CARE FOR. IT WAS THAT thought which gripped his heart at Greccio that Christmas he had decided to celebrate the Birth of Jesus in a new way. He had bought a real ox and ass to the altar so they, too, could share in this rebirth of Christ in the bread and wine of the Christmas Eucharist.

At Christmas it was the infant Christ who was born again in human hearts, and it struck Francis that God came to earth as a baby so that we would have someone to care for. Christmas was the dearest of feasts because it meant that God was now one of us. Flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, this child we could approach without fear. We could be silly and uninhibited as we sought to make Him laugh. We could be totally ourselves because a child accepts us just as we are and screams with delight at our little performances in his or her behalf.

Someone to care for, someone to please, someone to love. God, a helpless babe; God, a piece of Bread. How much trust God has in creatures! In the Eucharist and in the Nativity, we grow up because God places Himself in our care. We come out of ourselves if we are aware because we now have responsibilities for God. Not only the earth to till and creation to care for, but now God to care for.

And so strong was Francis’ desire to love, that at that Christmas Mass at Greccio the babe of Bethlehem appeared to him alive and smiling on the cold rock.

And he took the babe into his arms and held it to his heart, and the child was warm and soft. Francis’ virginity was made fruitful in this child he held to his breast. He had no child but Jesus Himself. His Lord had reversed the roles for him for all who need someone to love, someone to care for.

Seeing the Face of Christ in Others

By: Tim Narraway

“God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in him.” - John Piper

Francis during his life placed an emphasis on the humanity of Christ, at a time when all around were emphasizing his divinity and otherness. Francis genius was intuitive. The truths he felt within are truths theologians continue to grapple with.

His Christology was firmly rooted in the incarnation, and we witness this today around every nativity scene.

What moved Francis most was to contemplate how the Almighty would condescend to take on the form of the helpless, the weak and the frail. This emphasis encourages us to see the face of Christ in others, especially the poor.

In my own work as prison Chaplain, I rub shoulders with some of the most vulnerable in society. Many of them don't consider themselves vulnerable.

One of the biggest lessons for me has also been the most humbling. What I do is often not so important as that I am present. What I say is often not as important as my attentive listening. Many of the key conversations happen in the in-between places on the way to something else. So my most effective activity is “loitering with intent.”

One of the great theologians of Australia in recent times has been cartoonist Michael Leunig who encourages us to embrace our humanity in his prayer:

God accept our prayers
Send us tears in return.
Give freedom to this exchange.
Let us pray inwardly.
This is the breathing of the soul.
This is the vitality of the spirit.
For this we give thanks.
Amen.

Reviewing My Experience with Francis

By: Dr Gemma Dashwood

Having been a cradle Anglican, I have been involved in the church in one way or another throughout my 35 years. Being a musician I am often found at the organ or piano, but I also became a Lay Reader about 10 years ago, so help in the Sanctuary from time to time. Those experiences were all well and good, but there was a certain thunderbolt moment when I was given a pamphlet about the Third Order Franciscans about three years ago. It all seemed to fit - my love of animals, my passion for study and my desire for justice.

And so, I became an enquirer, with my first Franciscan outing being the Christmas gathering of 2009. I was warmly welcomed, and enjoyed meeting a range of people - all thoughtful, caring and loving.

My Novicing was undertaken at the same time as two others about six months later - and it was a wonderful experience. As I stated my Novice vows I felt the hand of my Novice Councillor on my shoulder - such an affirming gesture. And so I have continued to be challenged by Francis throughout my time as a novice as I've worked through my novice study notes, undertaken a commitment to daily prayer, and worked with spiritual advisors and my novice councillor. A short visit to Assisi in 2010 allowed me to understand the places that Francis had lived and worked - another inspiring experience.

My decision to proceed to Profession was made certain during the time I spent at the “Building Bridges” conference in Melbourne, where the wonderful routine of daily prayer, study, discussion and interaction was a truly uplifting and confirming experience.

As I plan for my profession I continue to be inspired by the support of other Franciscans and the love that is shared for each other. I feel truly blessed to be a part of it.

From the Editor

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The theme for this Edition centers on events in the Advent Church Calendar, sharing our Faith Journey with one another, and providing information on a Regional level. Your co-operation is proactive in providing communication to our wider community. Concentrating on the Advent Anthems has been a deep source of spiritual enrichment for me.

I thank each one of you for providing articles and your support in your readiness to assist me.

May the Spirit of Christmas bring you all peace, joy and many blessings.

The approximate date deadline for the Easter Edition is the 8th March, 2013.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Peace and all good, Salaam Ahlaikum, Shalom, Pace e Bene, & Namaste!

Gloria





By Glory

By: Ted Witham
Christmas AD 2011
Metre: 11.11.11.11 anapaestic
(‘Cradle Song’ TiS 318 or
‘Thailand’ TiS 164)

By Glory

By glory at Christmas,
Raised into God’s light,
Child comes to his planet,
his hard cross in sight.

By glory the angels
praise this One who comes,
tell us that he’s living;
with shepherds we run.

By glory the Gospel,
God’s justice and care,
we love one another,
to do right we dare.

By glory this Jesus,
God’s Immanuel,
with joy as his future,
all darkness dispels.

By glory friend Francis
depicted the birth,
with cradle and oxen,
he joined him to earth.

By glory at midnight
built manger and stall,
and now infant Jesus
is worshipped by all.

Be meek and humble of heart

By: Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Quotations in *italic* are from “The Disciple and the Master: St. Bonaventure’s Sermons on St. Francis of Assisi,” by Eric Doyle, OFM (Editor/Translator). 1983 Franciscan Herald Press.

In Saint Bonaventure’s first sermon on Saint Francis, he said “*Learn from me, that is, be meek and humble after my example. A person is meek by loving his brethren, humble by loving lowliness or ‘minority.’ To be meek is to be a brother to everybody; to be humble is to be less than everybody.*” Jesus teaches us “*Unless you turn and become children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*”

In the 21st Century there seems to be little understanding of meekness and humility. A friend of mine keeps telling me, you don’t have to be a doormat for other people. Well, I know how he means that: he means don’t let others take advantage of you. But if we start reasoning that way, meekness and humility go right out the window.

St. Bonaventure has another view on meekness: “*Meekness is necessary for the inward and outward practice of virtue so that one may remain serene in conscience and be well pleasing in the judgment and minds of one’s neighbours.... Meekness is necessary to attain eternal life. The Gospel tells us: Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.*” We know from the psalms that the meek shall possess the land and shall delight in abundance of peace.

Then St. Bonaventure speaks about humility: “*The fruits of humility are manifold. First, it calms the anger of God, while moving him to suspend judgment due to guilt.*” The second fruit of humility: “*it finds grace.*” Third, “*it brings righteousness to perfection.*” And, the fourth fruit, “*it leads to eternal glory.*”

If there were more people who did their best to be meek and humble of heart, there would be less anger, and subsequently, less war. The whole question in the Middle East can be resolved when everyone turns to God... in other words, when everyone involved, no matter what background or religion, makes a personal interior conversion to loving God, to strive for meekness and humility. We don’t have to tell anyone that we’re striving to become meek and humble; it’ll be very evident by your behaviour and relationships with others.



Our Pilgrimage to Rome

By: Revd Pirrial Clift

It was late spring when three friends and I arrived in Venice, the magical city of gondolas; intending to wend our way south to Rome, incorporating a Franciscan. There are so many Franciscan Saints – Francis and Clare’s ‘sons’ and ‘daughters, and we planned to visit some along the way. We were captivated by this stunningly beautiful city and spent a wonderful morning touring St Mark’s Basilica, where amongst other astonishing sights we stood beside the very rock upon which Jesus stood when he was baptized, a treasure amongst treasures in the Baptistery. It was very large- “How”, one might well ask “did it come to be in Venice”? If anyone knows, I am listening....

In a hired car we travelled south to Padua, where we visited the Scrovegni Chapel, which Giotto painted after he had decorated the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi. I found the series of exquisite frescoes showing stories



from the life of Christ the most moving. St Anthony of Padua [1195-1231] was the reason for our visit – but ‘his’ Basilica was closed, alas. Anthony is one of St Francis’ most famous Brothers: a preacher who attracted great crowds. At the request of his brothers St. Anthony was later commissioned also to teach theology, “But in such a manner,” St. Francis instructed “that the

spirit of prayer be not extinguished either in yourself or in the other brethren.” This Anthony never forgot, spending many hours in prayer as an example to his students. Once a man, at whose home St. Anthony was spending the night, came upon the saint and found him holding in his arms the Child Jesus, unspeakably beautiful and surrounded with heavenly light. For this reason St. Anthony is often depicted holding the Child Jesus. He is the Patron Saint of lost things, and I owe him a thousand thanks for helping me find all kinds of lost items.

Our next stop was Ravenna, where we feasted our eyes on the exquisite mosaics, then to Florence where we spent 2 nights. The second evening we spent at St



Mark’s Anglican Church listening to operatic arias – a spectacular show in a beautiful setting, and all proceeds went to a children’s charity in India, ‘Amala’. In the 2 great galleries we visited – the Accademia and the Uffizi, we couldn’t help noticing how the great artists of the past so often drew their inspiration from religious themes. Amongst my

favourites was this wonderfully tender depiction of Mary with the Christ Child and John the Baptist by Sandro Botticelli “Mary of the Rose-garden”. Francis and Clare were both devoted to Mary. Perhaps for the way she gave herself so completely to God’s will; for her example of loving and faithful discipleship; because she is the Mother of Jesus; because she brings home to us again and again the mystery of the Incarnation, God-with-us; God made flesh. St. Bonaventure bears witness that St. Francis honored her as Mother, when he says: “He loved with an unspeakable affection the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, forasmuch as that she had made the Lord of glory our Brother....” (Leg. Mai. IX,3) The first recorded instance of the recitation of the Angelus was in the 13th century in a Franciscan monastery – although it was already a well-established custom. At Stroud and in Franciscan religious houses around the world the bell still rings out to remind everybody within hearing that God is with us. Three times a day we pause to remember God’s gift of Jesus to the world. We four pilgrims also paused and repeated the Angelus when we could.

Siena was next, where at the Church of St Francis one can see a collection of consecrated hosts which have remained incorrupt since 1730. The story goes that the hosts were inside a valuable ciborium which was stolen. The people were instructed by the Bishop to pray for their reparation, and they were recovered in the poor box of another church. The Friars have reputedly subjected the hosts to investigation by various Church representatives over the years: Pope John xxiii included, but they remain sweet smelling and whole. No explanation is forthcoming. We were not there at the right time to see the hosts; but I have to admit encountering a strong sense of the sacred in that little Chapel, even before I was certain it was the right place.

As the SSF Friars here in Stroud have dedicated their Hermitage under the name of St Bernardine, I was keen to visit the Basilica of the Osservanza which is outside Siena. St Bernardine [1380 - 1444] is another famous Franciscan preacher – he criss-crossed Italy on foot, preaching to huge



crowds. Especially known for his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, Bernardine devised a symbol—IHS [the Latinised version ‘Jesus’ of the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek ihsouz] in Gothic letters on a blazing sun, and is often depicted with it in Christian art. Bernardine became known as ‘The Apostle of Italy’, for his likeness

to St Paul in his constant wanderings and powerful preaching. We were in time for a family Mass – it was a full house, bursting with children who were sitting on the steps of the side chapels giggling and whispering as children do, happily accepted by all. As my Italian is extremely poor I can’t really say whether the current incumbent lives up to the fiery preaching of St Bernardine, but his sermon seemed to be well accepted!

Parts of the 3,000 years old Etruscan walls of Cortona can still be seen, forming the basis for the current walls surrounding this picturesque town which stole my heart with its homely welcome and quaint old-world atmosphere. And the views! We ate in a little restaurant which had exquisitely embroidered curtains. When I enquired where



they could be purchased the waitress shrugged, smiled disarmingly and said “You can do it! in the winter when you cannot go out, you can do it – it’s easy”. St Margaret of Cortona 1247-87 was a single mother renowned for her beauty who became a Franciscan Tertiary after her partner was murdered. St Margaret’s incorrupt remains can be seen under the altar at the basilica dedicated in her name, situated high on a hill at the eastern

end of the city. One can also see the original crucifix from which Jesus spoke to Margaret after she joined the Order, asking “What do you want, Poverella? (Poor One)”, And Margaret answered: “Only You, My Lord!” St Margaret became well known for her penance and service to the poor, for the depth of her prayer and holy way of life.

*Be tuned in to Part 11 in the
Easter Edition
On ‘Francis’*

**Reflection from Assisi –
Tuesday 13th October, 2012**

From: Rev’d Hilary and Paul Singleton

We have been in Assisi for 10 nights and have had the most wonderful experience. The thought of leaving in the morning fills me with sadness. To a Franciscan this place is of deep spiritual significance and that is reflected in the ambiance of the whole town and its surrounds. It is November and the trees are turning glorious colours of gold, bronze and red. The tourists are few and it is very peaceful. There are pilgrims and religious of many different orders. Young nuns and monks; Benedictines and Franciscans all enjoying the sanctity of holy sites. We have visited San Damiano and returned there for Vespers and Benediction at 5 pm. What an experience of devotion, humility and peace as the resident community of brothers lead us in singing sacred songs and liturgical verses and responses. Having no Italian language does not hinder our appreciation of the depth of spirituality and worship. The songs are simple and we get to learn the refrains in Italian before the service begins. I notice the humility of the young priest who leads the liturgy and appreciate the musical skill and kindness of

the organist who also leads the singing. I thought that San Damiano was the jewel in the crown – and it is a very special place in its simplicity and significance – until we visited the Eremo delle Carceri on mount Subasio. To wander in the forest that Francis loved and to pray in his cave is a blessing so overwhelming that I don’t quite know what to do with it. The pots of colourful cyclamen and the perfume of lilies fill every Franciscan chapel and site. Truly, this place is heaven on earth. The views of the mediaeval town which we enjoy from our apartment overlooking San Rufino cathedral and of the valley below are breath taking. We walk, we pray, we receive blessings beyond our expectations.

A few days ago we decided to walk from San Damiano to Santa Maria degli Angeli but we went the long way and needed directions from some sisters at San Damiano. With a chuckle and a glint in their eyes they obliged us and wished us a “Bon Camino.” About 5 kilometres later we understood their joke– it was a long walk but the olive groves and vineyards were worth every step. Then to sit and pray in the Porziuncula and visit the place where Francis died was another time of deep reflection. I am so blessed to have been called to this Franciscan vocation. It is a profound privilege and a mystery but a calling that I am sure of and now know in richer layers.

On Sunday we worshipped with the local Anglican community at the intimate but beautifully frescoed church of St Leonard’s. Theirs is truly the most beautiful church hall in the world with its vaulted and frescoed roof. We enjoyed Sunday lunch together at the restaurant opposite with the congregation and visitors from Scotland, USA and Canada.

We have been following the chronology of Francis’ life so started at San Rufino and the font where Francis and Clare were baptised. We arrive at the Basilica de San Francesco only on day four of our stay here. Our apartment is adjacent to the community of the Poor Clares and the house where Clare lived. The Chiesa de Santa Clara is just five minutes’ walk away and holds the original cross of San Damiano. We pray and contemplate the compassion of God crucified and give thanks for Clare and her sisters who persevered and continue to live the life of love, poverty and humility. Every church and site is a prayer stop for parish, family and Third Order of St Francis family. A special candle for you all is left at the altar of Francis’ tomb. You are all in my heart and prayers and feel that the distance of time and space does not separate us from each other or from Francis, Clare and the risen Christ. In the Spirit we are one. The prayers that are offered here around the clock every day soak Assisi in love and devotion. It is truly the city of peace and an experience I will reflect upon and appreciate for the rest of my life.

*Please see next page
Photo of the
Assisi Pilgrimage*



Back Row - L to R: Keith Butler, Catherine De Ron, Jan Down, Joy Bartlett, Sandra Jackson

Middle Row - L to R: Patti Singleton, Michael Down, Denis Woodbridge, Pauline Weston, Val Butler

Front Row - L to R: Daphne Edwardson, Chris Winkett, Barbara Axten, Michael Yore (Retreat Conductor) Helen Granowski

Annual Third Order Retreat –Victoria/Tasmania Region – 2012

By: Sandra Jackson

Our annual retreat took place on 26-28 October. As for some years now, it was held at ‘Goyura’, the Salesian Retreat Centre at Lysterfield on the outskirts of Melbourne, but tertiaries came from as far afield as Ocean Grove, Geelong, the Mornington Peninsula, Castlemaine and Leongatha. There were 17 in all, though some couldn’t be with us for the whole weekend. After a bring-and-share meal on the Friday night, we gathered for a time of ‘sharing journeys’ followed by Compline. This began the silence which lasted until lunchtime after the Sunday Eucharist and renewals.

We were really blessed in having Michael Yore, one of our conference speakers, to lead our retreat. His four addresses on the theme of ‘A New Creation’ began with Seeing with New Eyes. The retreat, Michael said, was ‘a graced moment’ in which ‘to open ourselves to conversion’ and to look at ‘what it is in our lives as Franciscan followers of Jesus that “prevent(s) us from recognizing Him.”’ ‘It is love that opens our eyes.’ The second address, Overturning ‘isms’, looked at the spiritual revolution entailed in ‘being born again’ – as in Francis’s case, ‘a total change of perspective’ from ‘the dominant cultural narrative’ – ‘seeing the Lord of all creation in a blindingly new way . . . and having seen things anew, to be changed in the way we follow him, that is, the way we live our lives, the choices we make, the way we relate to others and to creation around us.’ Michael’s third address about ‘the love story of God’ – ‘His boundless and extravagant longing to be with us’ – began with a striking quotation from St Thomas Aquinas: “God is pure joy and pure joy demands company.” – a very Franciscan way of talking about God. ‘For Francis, God comes disguised as creation . . . as a baby . . . as bread and wine.’ ‘To come to believe in God’s unconditional love is to have our perception of how we live and move and have our being totally transformed.’ The final address was titled, Listening with the Heart: Unless you change and become

like little children... (Matthew 18: 1-4) Like children, we need to have a ‘way of listening and seeing that is totally open to the unexpected, to the divine, because childlikeness (not ‘childishness’) is an uncluttered state, open and receptive.’

The retreat was indeed a graced time. Michael Yore very generously provided each of us with copies of the four addresses. You can contact Sandra Jackson if you would like to read them.

Reflections from Assisi from previous page



San Rufino (the Cathedral of Assisi where Francis and Clare were baptized)