

THE THIRD ORDER

Australian Province Newsletter,

PNG & East Asia

A d v e n t E d i t i o n



Some thoughts on Advent from our Chaplain:

Most of us have now forgotten the Melbourne Cup - "the race that stops the nation" - unless of course you are a Melbournian. And even newly adopted ones tend to claim it as their own, at least for those fateful minutes.

I watched the Cup in Canberra, without realising that the day my old school-friend and I had arranged to meet to celebrate our 80th birthdays fell on that auspicious day. My friend had travelled from Suffolk to be with her extended Aussie family in Sydney and Canberra and she was very keen to include me in her celebrations. But neither of us gave any thought to "Cup Day".

I'd known my friend's family since she came to my Presbyterian school as a sole Roman Catholic, and her youngest brothers, the seven-year old twins, made a marked impression on me with their knowledge of Canon Law. We met for a celebratory lunch at the home of one of the twins and the other came down from Queensland.

As it was something of a family reunion, we decided to do the occasion properly, putting the television on after our celebratory lunch and organising a sweep. The family dog was included and of course my Rowan, who was invited to the party, also had a ticket. We paid a dollar a horse with several each to complete the field.

We didn't know one horse from another and were surprised when the favourite, Fiorente, flattened his ears, put his head down and charged across the line. The joy on the face of his trainer, Gai Waterhouse, so often piped to the post and finally attaining her goal, was beyond being captured in two dimensions.

Even through the medium of the television screen we could feel the excitement of the crowd building up before the race and the buzz of anticipation when it looked as if Fiorente was just nosing ahead. And then when he passed the post and the crowd went mad. Then the slow coming down to earth as the solid gold cups were presented and those sporting fashion shoes could rest their tortured feet.

It was all down hill after that for many, with little time to draw breath. Next stop the office parties, the School break-ups, the Christmas drinks and all the pre-Christmas preparations. Hardly a time to stop and think of anything but the relief of the holiday break and possibly the January sales. It is all go, go, go, especially for mothers of families trying to cope with all their individual demands and needs.

But to go back to the Cup. Most of the anticipation and hope for the spectators was transitory. Unless they had a win, their joy was short lived. However, for Gai Waterhouse, who had trained the horse and had failed to win the prize so often, her hope was on much more solid ground. It was based on faith in her own past experience, in her establishment, her team of handlers, her horse and her jockey. The win would happen. But when? Sometime soon. All the signs were right. It just meant keeping hoping. Her hope was a living thing as it was based on a foundation of faith.

Faith is a deep down commitment to truth, to what we believe, and like Gai's faith in her establishment, it is based on our own experience and experiences from the past. Faith can be stubborn and hard to shift. It is so deep seated. Sometimes it is difficult to apply our faith as it has so many aspects. It is difficult to make operative, to be a truly living entity.

But Hope is more agile. It can be linked with a short-term outcome. Or it can be open-ended. Hope transcends setbacks and defeats. However bad the situation, there is always a chink of light, a distant glimmer. This glimmer can be blotted out if we choose. We can stuff up the crack and stay in the dark. Or we can change the perspective, note where the glimmer appears and focus on it.

Hope opens up a new way of seeing. Not always clearly focused, but there nevertheless. We hold this gleam in our heart. Not formulating any definite plans, just allowing God to share this glow until it radiates within us.

Hope is often connected with a goal or an end - a desire for something, out of our reach. If this becomes an obsession, it puts paid to true hope. For hope must be open-ended and makes no demands. For then it can become fixed in concrete.

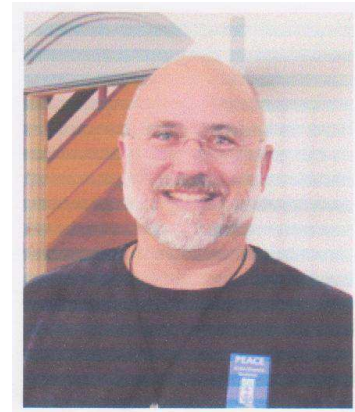
But more likely our hope is for some practical outcome. We might be hoping for a good outcome to a trial of some kind, an exam result, a medical test. The matter may be resolved or at least we know the next step. Or we just have to keep hoping, "hoping against hope", as St Paul puts it. We then find our hoping holds onto our faith. Our hoping puts on flesh and we find we are in partners in the faith in the living Christ.

Hope needs to be accompanied by prayer. Prayer and Hope belong together. They are our connection with all that God is and the desires and needs that matter to us. And this means they matter to God.

Over/

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

Letter from our Minister General



We pray for the well-being of those we love, not just for their special needs but for the whole of who they are within and beyond themselves. We pray with confidence that the all-seeing God will guide and direct all our ways. We pray for our hopes for ourselves, for our hopes for the peace of the world for our hope that God will bring about restoration and reconciliation for the world God has made. And we leave all this in God's hands.

Yet we do concern ourselves in the needs of the world and of the tiny part we can play in furthering God's plans. We hold all of this in prayer, trusting in the overwhelming love of the God who holds all things together.

This is our hope as we come to the season of Advent and prepare for the deep joy of Christmas and the promise of new birth. The newness in Christ that hope brings within each of our hearts. May you and those you love know true joy this Christmas Season. With all those joining with Francis and Clare this Christmas and all the little things that bring you deep peace in the love of Christ, and with my love to you all, Helen.

I am writing this at Francistide - an appropriate time to share about the reflections, conversations and some decisions made at the recent Minister's Provincial meeting.

Every two years, the Minister General convenes a meeting of the Ministers Provincial from the five TSSF provinces around the world. The Third Order functions amidst an incredible diversity of geopolitical, theological and socioeconomic circumstances. By the grace of God we follow the same Rule of Life and, as we discover when we gather, share the same Franciscan spirituality and ethos. As we shared, we explored how to accommodate our diversity and still respect that which binds us together as a community of Anglican Franciscan Christians.

We met in Simon's Town, South Africa and enjoyed spending time with local Tertiaries and experiencing local culture. Amidst different names for some positions, different Statutes, and slightly different procedures we find ourselves living out our rule in remarkably similar ways.

We also discussed:

- The process of profession in different provinces and regions within provinces
- Communications between provinces, and how to enhance them. (Facebook users are encouraged to "Like" www.facebook.com/pages/Third-Order-Society-of-Saint-Francis and www.facebook.com/TSSFMinisterGeneral.)

- **Ministers Provincial Development Fund – a means to support emerging regions, fund specific projects and satisfy emergency appeals**
- **TSSF Central Fund – provincial contributions to this fund support the interprovincial work of the Third Order**
- **Titles and roles of Formation related functions among the provinces**
- **Reporting, renewal and release – norms and procedures among the provinces**
- **Associates/Companions – who has them, who doesn't, what's similar and what's different**
- **Comprehensive discussion of initial and ongoing formation, with a goal of having an interprovincial formators conference.**

The quality of initial formation is so important to development of Franciscan spirituality. The provinces will be working collaboratively to share ideas, insights and experiences with the goal of enhancing each of our respective formation programs. We shared similar experiences of the need for post-profession ongoing formation, and will work on this in parallel with the traditional formation process to provide a continuum of growth and maturity in the Franciscan way.

I have been able to directly participate in the life of three of our five provinces and have been blessed to meet several Tertiaries from the other two provinces. I hope to visit the other two within the next couple of years. I am in awe of the foundation that has been laid over the years to ensure consistency of essentials. This is obviously apparent when meeting other Tertiaries from other parts of the planet and feeling a sense of connectedness and... community!

With the goal of continuing to reinforce the idea of community, we discussed the marks of profession, and the following was unanimously affirmed by all of the Ministers present, and commended for communication and implementation among all of the provinces:

The Ministers Provincial of the Third Order, meeting in Simon's Town, South Africa, re-emphasize the importance of praying daily the Community Obedience and affirm that it is one of the marks of profession together with reporting, renewal and a financial offering. Particular reflection on the Principle of the Day and praying for the order including Provincial and worldwide intercessions are of primary importance.

This Daily Obedience has been commended to Tertiaries Daily for many years, but has never been asserted as being one of the marks of profession. It is to be incorporated into all in pre-profession formation as a part of the Postulant's or Novice's discipline.

In addition to the printed materials that the various provinces may prepare, and apps for smartphones that individual provinces may produce, all can access the Community Obedience at: <http://www.tssf.org/obedience.shtml> Intercessions for each province will be from the respective province's intercession list or Directory.

The Community Obedience may be prayed as a stand alone right. Those who pray the Daily Office may integrate it into the office as follows:

Introduction and reading of the Principle of the day at the beginning of the office.

Intercessions for the worldwide community and individuals from the respective province at the point in the office where there is free prayer and general intercessions followed by the prayer and the collect for the day.

It is our hope that the discipline of the Community Obedience will truly "knit us together in community and prayer"

May God continue to bless you as you win others to God's love after the example of Francis of Saint Francis.

Peace, love and all good,

Ken Norian, TSSF

My Journey towards the Third Order of St. Francis

By: Rev. Richard Brown

I first became aware of St. Francis whilst going to high school in Inverell. One of the passengers on the school bus was sharing that a Franciscan monk (Catholic) from the town of Manila (NSW) had come to his church and blessed the animals on St. Francis day.

Many years later whilst serving in the Australian Army I came across an Army Padre who was a Franciscan (Catholic). I was impressed in the way he carried out his duties as a chaplain in a quiet manner but being very effective ministering to Vietnam Veterans.

Being selected to be a student for the Diocese of Grafton, I attended the Theological College of St. Francis Brisbane. It was here that I was drawn to Franciscan spirituality through the input from Brother Howard from the Brookfield Friary. This input was a part of our spirituality awareness, to discover and appreciate the different forms of spirituality, which belonged to the world wide church.

At the same time a Jesuit priest also shared the Ignatius Spirituality with us. Both Francis and Ignatius were soldiers and perhaps that's why I was drawn to them.

On one hand Francis was a gentle man of God where as Ignatius was a forceful man of God, both their rule of life interested my inner being.

At the commencement of my final year at St. Francis College I became involved with the Coffee Brigade on Friday mornings. This involvement took the form of arriving at the old Main Roads Valley site around 5.30 am to make up two urns of coffee, one white the other with milk (powered), sugar, sandwiches and fruit from the cold room. This then was loaded into a small van to go to five parks around the Brisbane CBD. A Franciscan monk from the friary would accompany me on the rounds of these five parks, where some two hundred cups of coffee, fruit and sandwiches were distributed each Friday.

The two main Franciscans that travelled with me on Friday mornings were Brother Jeffery and Brother Alan Barnabas (Alan Lamb). On one occasion when Brother Alan Barnabas accompanied me, we had reached our last park on the south side of the Brisbane River down where Southbank is now. I was putting the urns back into the van when I heard a woman under the influence of alcohol yelling abuses at Brother Alan. Julie had asked Alan for a cigarette but Alan said he did not have any. This caused Julie to act in an abusive way towards his calling into religious life, also his manhood, and using filthy language. I became quite angry and I felt like knocking her down and as I came around the van to where Alan and Julie were, I witnessed a wonderful incident that had a great spiritual awakening. Brother Allen put his arm around Julie's shoulder and said, "Julie, God loves you, and so I must!"

I saw in Alan's action an image reflection of St. Francis, and of Christ. This incident started me slowly on the road towards developing Franciscan Spirituality and becoming a Tertiary.

Ephesians 5:19-20

New International Version (NIV)

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

Refugees - Manus Island, PNG Report

By: Carol Tucker

Sent to Sandra Jackson - Update

I contacted Carol Hucker for an update on her work on Manus Island, PNG, and she has sent me the following report. Please keep praying for Carol and the refugees among whom she is working, particularly that effective advocates will be found to allow the desperate voices of the asylum seekers to be heard.

Carol writes:

Thank you for your email.

I am back home and doing well, although I've managed to pick up a minor illness from my time in Manus, which is making me a little more tired than normal. I'm in the process of applying for another job on Manus, which will see me work there consistently 3 weeks on and 3 weeks off. I have another interview with them today. So I'm hoping that it will be successful. I did have a very pleasant experience saying the Community Obedience on the warship, especially walking around on the top deck to do it, sometimes watching the sunset.

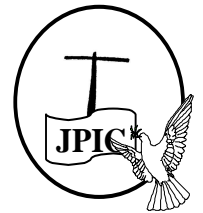
What has been on my mind since my return is the living conditions of the asylum seekers and the lack of accountability of the PNG & Australian governments regarding this situation. For example, there is one large room which has a tin roof, with limited fans, which houses 140. I nearly cried when I saw this; it was quite confronting and appalling. There is no world organisation who is monitoring this situation. I know that the Australian government's view is to make the conditions as hard as possible for people so that they will make the choice to return home. I happened to meet the Immigration Minister while I was there and this was his focus. What is further disturbing is that there is no guarantee from the PNG Govt that people will be settled in PNG. Further, one of the Australian Immigration guys told me that people would need to learn fluent pidgin before they are considered and this is a process that can take between 5-10 years, if at all they are resettled. People there are no longer considered refugees but detainees. Some people like the Somalian group, for example, will be held in detention indefinitely as they have no government in their country due to the war and do not have the choice, like others, to return home. Before I returned home there were over 1000 men at the centre.

When the Immigration Minister was there he met with some of the guys to tell them that they would never be resettled in Australia and would not take any questions. As he was walking out the guys shouted this, 'Nobody cares about us. You treat us like animals, we will act like animals.' I found this pretty heartbreaking. They really need advocates to have their voices heard.

If anyone has any ideas about channels for advocacy, Carol would like to hear from you.

"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](#)



Kissing Lepers

By: David McAvenna

As Franciscans, we are all aware of the horror Francis had for lepers and how he was confronted and challenged to face this fear head on and how he didn't find true freedom until he had done so.

God brought him to the point which caused him to confront his fear and repulsion head on! In a moment that had a profound influence on Francis and how he lived the remainder of his life, he embraced a leper in a face to face encounter and was set free from his fear and repulsion; was totally and utterly transformed. According to the Old Testament, lepers were total outcasts (e.g. Lev 13:45-46) – they couldn't associate with anyone! There was no living in or with community (apart from other lepers perhaps). The one with an infectious skin disease was very, very alone.

Matthew, Mark and Luke each record Jesus healing a leper [Mk 1:40-41; Matt 8:2-3; Luke 5:12-13]. Luke records a second story with ten lepers calling out to Jesus for mercy. All were healed but only one came back to thank Jesus and that one a Samaritan.

Matthew records Jesus sending out the twelve. His instructions include "cleanse those who have leprosy ... Freely you have received, freely give" (10:5-8).

Who are today's lepers?

It is very apparent that there are those in both the Old and New Testaments who are 'unclean' – people who had leprosy. People who, because of physical infirmity, were the outcasts of their society. People who were rejected.

So too in Francis' day.

Jesus' response was one of compassion and a willingness to heal – even a willingness to touch. So too Francis – when he finally faced his fears.

But that was then! What about now? What about 21st Century Australia? We don't have lepers! Or do we? Leprosy still exists, but is curable if diagnosed in time. Surely it doesn't have the same stigma as in Jesus' and Francis' day?

But it does beg the questions: Do we have 'lepers' in our society today? And what form does their 'leprosy' take? People who may not literally have leprosy but are treated in a similar manner to those of Jesus' and Francis' day? Those who are rejects, outcasts, unclean, or unwelcome in today's society. People who need to be embraced and 'kissed'. People who need to be treated with love and compassion, with respect and dignity.

Who are these lepers? Where are they? Are there any in our own communities, even in our own lives? People of whom, like Francis, we may be fearful? For whatever reason!

What are we afraid of?

There are aspects of life for all of us that cause fear to come bubbling to the surface [e.g. Mark 4:35-41; Mt 8:23-27; Lk 8:22-25]. Whether it's fear of a storm ... of heights ... of the unusual ... of being outside of our comfort zones ... of the unknown ... fear of 'lepers'. Or if not fear, apprehension ... uncertainty ... doubt. Or a questioning of our own ability.

When it comes to 'kissing lepers,' or put another way, reaching out to others, whoever they may be, whatever their background, whatever way they might be different that causes us to hesitate, we need to face our fears and perhaps do as Francis did: take a step of faith, trusting that God will do something that just might help us to overcome whatever is holding us back ... whatever causes us to hesitate.

And it just may be when we take the step of faith, that God will help the 'leper' – set him or her free – emotionally, physically, spiritually ...

Recognising the 'leper' that is (or was) me

There is another aspect we need to face and understand in order to be free to 'kiss lepers': that is to recognise the leper in ourselves. For we are all unworthy before God; we are all unclean; all unacceptable. At least, we were.

But, in and through Jesus Christ, we have been set free, we have been cleansed, we have been made acceptable, and we are worthy, because of what He has done (Rom 3:23-24; Eph 2:12-13).

Without exception, that's who we are. We are the 'lepers' whose lives have been changed in and through relationship with the living Christ. And that is the strength of our message and the hope that we have.

What is St Francis' message to us today?

To be ready, willing, able and free to 'kiss lepers' we must first embrace the knowledge and the freedom that we ourselves are 'lepers' who have been embraced, kissed, by Jesus.

When we recognise the leper in ourselves, and realise and understand that Jesus himself has embraced us, and has set us free, we are then free to embrace others – regardless of who they are, regardless of the state of their 'leprosy'.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20) Our uncleanness has been dealt a death blow and we live in the freedom purchased for us by Jesus and in the power of His ever-present Spirit.

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Hong Kong tertiaries after their renewal of profession this year received by David White at the beginning of his recent overseas trip in the Quiet Chapel of St John's Cathedral. From left to right, Simon Fong, David White, John Davison and Stephen Farmer.

The Dark Night of the Soul – continues

By: Terry Gatfield tssf

Previous editions of the TSSF Newsletter have made an attempt to highlight the importance of understanding the nature of darkness – both light and darkness emanate from God and they are so often interwoven. In addition, the articles started to unpack the notion of the Dark Night of the Soul and its origins – a special individual encounter with darkness. It was highlighted that many of the people in the scriptures engaged in the Dark Night, they include Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Paul. However, the encounter is not been restricted to those in the biblical narratives. The annals of more contemporary history are packed with many more individuals and St Francis is included.

St Francis in the early days before the full impact of his ministry he spent about a year in jail after defeat at battle. On release and in illness and disillusionment he was led into solitude and prayer back in the company of beggars from Assisi. Throughout the following years of ministry there were many recorded periods of darkness and solitude - no doubt a number of them being Dark Night of the Soul encounters.

The story is present continuous especially for many desiring a deeper spiritual consciousness and a closer walk with Jesus.

What precedes the Dark Night of the Soul?

There appears to be no simple map of the road that people travel if they engage in the Dark Night of the Soul. Each person's encounter is unique. However, a common set of indicators seems to emerge along these lines:

- Faith is cognitively strong but limited in the regions of the heart and soul;
- Prayer is not a stranger but often the heavens are as brass;
- Meditations and bible readings lack depth, lustre, joy and meaning;
- There may be a strong loyalty to fellowship yet often accompanied with personal discontentment with the shallowness of traditional Christianity;
- There is understanding of the path towards inner peace and joy and yet life seems spiritually barren;
- There is understanding of a higher power at work in other people's lives but this is laced with the feeling of being an exile;
- The heart and soul are numb yet there is a yearning and an ache for a higher degree of spiritual consciousness;
- There is a strong desire to find other diversions including friends and churches;
- Friends notice the difference but don't understand your interior pain.

Characteristics as you journey the Dark Night

The duration and intensity varies between individuals and something like these characteristics can be expected:

1. There is a feeling of intense aloneness—empathy will be a distant friend.
2. In its fullness of the Dark Night you don't know where you are spiritually.
3. When you are in the Dark Night you are able to function quite well but acquaintances never suspect there is anything wrong.
4. Motivation is at an all-time low - only expediency and urgency has any degree of priority.
5. Nights are difficult and dreams are filled with aspects of escape.
6. You are caught between the old way of life and new possibilities.
7. Your sense of inadequacy and not knowing what to do next becomes gnawingly constant. Your ego keeps you ensnared.
8. You feel completely stranded, not knowing where you are spiritually and feel dreadfully separated from God and man.

But all is not lost - the narrative continues (space permitting) in the next edition where we conclude our story on more of a positive note.

“The new reality”

Living in the light of eternity

Excerpt from: Seek the Silences

With Thomas Merton

Page 186-187

By: Charles R. Ringma

There is something deadeningly ordinary about life. Caught in the cycle of birth and ageing, night and day, and work and play, we can live monotonous regularity and without transcendent meaning. I know something of this way of life not only from my years devoid of faith and spirituality, but also since my conversion.

Of course, this need not be. Even the ordinary can be seen as a blessing from God. The daily rhythm of life is a structure that God provides for our well-being. Life itself, family, friends, society and work are all good gifts. Therefore, the ordinary need not be ordinary if it is lived in the light of God's presence and is celebrated with gratitude and joy. This view on life makes the ordinary sacred. But sadly, we all too often take the ordinary for granted, or even worse, despise what we have.

Thankfully, there is more to life than simply the ordinary. The extra-ordinary and the transcendent can also be a part of our daily existence.

Mereton suggests to us that the person 'who loves God is playing on the doorstep of eternity'. The word picture that he uses is not only a joyful one marked by simplicity and abandonment, but it also contains a profound spiritual truth, namely, that even here, on earth, we already experience something of the powers of the age to come. In the enlightening and transformative power of the Word, the mystery of the sacrament, the exuberance or solemnity of worship, the intimacy of prayer, the revealing dream and the whispers of the Spirit, god playfully enters our normal reality as the God of surprises.

There is nothing frivolous about all of this. But it is playful. For God paints a different picture, creates a different melody and dances a different rhythm from the ones with which we are familiar.

When the God who is beyond us and our world touches our lives, we have the experience not only of differentness, but of a homecoming that gives us eternal security.

December Prayer

An Islamic Prayer for Peace

*In the Name of Allah,
the beneficent, the merciful:
Praise be to the Lord of the
Universe who has created us and
made us into tribes and nations
that we may know each other,
not that we may despise each other.
If the enemy incline towards peace,
do thou also incline towards peace, and
trust in God, for the Lord is one that
hears and knows all things.
And the servants of God Most Gracious
are those who walk on
the Earth in humility, and when we
address them, we say, "Peace."
— U.N. Day of Prayer for World Peace 2*

THE SAINT BEHIND THE NAME – JACOPONE DA TODI

By: Rev Ted Witham

We celebrate the Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi (1228-1336) for his breath-taking spiritual poetry. Born in the Umbrian town of Todi, Jacopone trained as a lawyer, although he spent much of his time as a student studying the love songs of the jongleurs.

He practised for some years as a celebrity lawyer. He later threw over all the material trappings of success and spent perhaps ten years in the rough habit of a Tertiary, wandering from town to town spreading the gospel message through songs and poetry.

He felt a particular closeness to the ageing Brother Leo still living at the Portiuncula near Assisi and to the zelanti, the friars who emphasised absolute poverty. Eventually he sought entry to the convent at Todi. The friars there took some time to accept him: they were of the more relaxed party, and were perhaps reluctant to accept a strong personality at the extreme other end of the Franciscan movement. Jacopone agreed to remain a lay brother without the privileges of clerical office within the Order.

Apart from a few months in Rome assisting his old friend the hermit pope Celestine V, Jacopone spent the rest of his life in seclusion in the convent at Todi.

His reputation for saintliness continued to grow particularly among Tertiaries. Guilds of Tertiaries gathered to sing Jacopone's songs, often belting them out like rugby fans singing Abide With Me.

Jacopone is probably not a saint because of his poems satirising Pope Celestine's worldly successor Boniface VIII!

Jacopone's story reveals the interplay between the interior and exterior life: how as a Tertiary, he lived la santa pazia (the holy madness). His wandering life reflected the roller-coaster emotions of the jubilo. This early stage was like being drunk on all Creation and with the Creator. (p. 79)

Jacopone strikingly believed that God does not fit with narrow-mindedness.

God does not dwell in narrow hearts,
the larger the heart the greater the desire for God -
poverty has such a great heart that Deity dwells there.
(Lauda LX)

Eventually Jacopone realised that he needed to be more ordered in love. He passed through the stage of intellectual integration, to a stage of letting go completely to find "Love beyond all language, imageless Good." (p. 225)

Jacopone writes of this final spiritual stage:

You possess – and you are the
possessed,
In such a complete union
There is no division
That can drag you away from him.
You drink – and you are the drink
In this transformation.
(Lauda XCI)



The saint discovers that God's love is as ordinary and amazing as gravity, felt as the soul's weight, carrying it to its right place; God's love is "the secret of stability, the rule of the Universe". (p.235)

The Laude (Praises) deserve to be better known. They resonate well with our modern sensibility being both direct and yet clear in describing complexities of the spiritual journey.

Jacopone's story is told by the Anglican mystic and scholar Evelyn Underhill in *Jacopone Da Todi, Poet and Mystic-1228-1306, a Spiritual Biography*, London: J.M. Dent 1919 (available for loan through the public library system).

Underhill's book includes a translation of many of the Laude.

Enter into Prayer by way of "descent"

Excerpt from Page 24 of "Franciscan Prayer"

By: Ilia Delio, OSF

As Minister General of a large Order, Bonaventure provided, among other things, spiritual direction for those seeking God. In a letter to Poor Clare nuns, he offered directives as to how we might enter into prayer by way of "descent." The steps are summarized as follows:

- Return to yourself;
- Enter into your heart;
- Ponder what you were, are, should have been, called to be;
- What you are by nature;
- What you are through sin;
- What you should have been through effort;
- What you can still be through grace;
- Meditate in your heart;
- Let your spirit brood. (Are you resentful, angry, jealous);
- Plow this field, work on yourself;
- Strive for freedom within, the freedom that leads to relationship with God, realizing that God will never force us to love him;
- Lack of self-knowledge and failure to appreciate one's own worth, make for faulty judgment in all other matters;
- If you are not able to understand (and accept) what is beyond you.

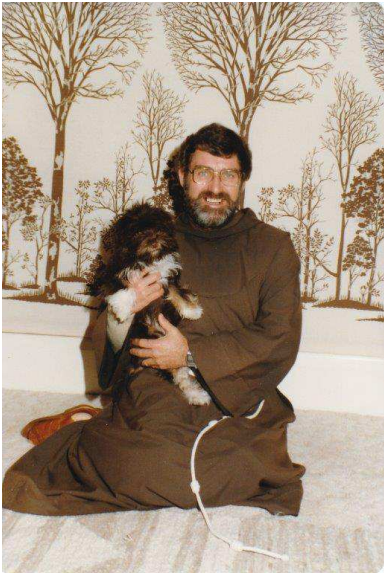
Bonaventure's advice is practical and balanced. We cannot love the God we cannot see unless we love the god we see within ourselves and in others. The more we are able to find God within ourselves, the more we can find God outside ourselves. The deeper our relationship with God, the greater the realization of our identity in God, that is, the closer we come to God. The more we are ourselves the more we can love others, for no other reason or purpose but simply to love them because God is love.

Third Order Conference 2015

This is a preliminary notice to alert you that the 2015 Conference will be held at the Canberra Boy's Grammar School Canberra ACT. Details will be sent to you as soon as possible. The Conference is held once every three years and is a wonderful opportunity for us to come together in community. Canberra and regional Tertiaries look forward to planning our gathering and welcoming you.

John Gibson TSSF

Regional Minister NSW B



This photo was sent to me by Colin Fidock. This photo was taken when Br Alan Barnabas visited Burra in 1984. He is pictured at our house with Mother Maya (our Tibetan terrier). Br Alan was travelling around Australia meeting with the tertiaries.

Fr Alan Lamb RIP

By: Godfrey Fryar tssf
Bishop of Rockhampton.

Alan was known to many of us Tertiaries as Br Alan Barnabas ssf.

Alan Lamb was born in the UK and lived his early years in Northumberland. He was a Geordie by background and affection, but also very much a man who loved Australia, the country in which he lived for most of his life.

He trained as a priest at St Francis College, Brisbane and was ordained deacon and priest in St Paul's Cathedral Rockhampton by the Bishop of that Diocese.

He served as assistant curate in Longreach from 1965 to 1969 and also as curate in the parish of Wandal in Rockhampton till 1970.

Alan was a great romantic and from early in his life, that romantic spirit was particularly attracted to St Francis of Assisi, so much so that in 1970 Alan joined the Society of St Francis at Brookfield and became Brother Alan Barnabas ssf. He remained a Franciscan friar for 27 years.

When he left SSF in 1997 in his early 60's, Alan served for a short time as Assistant Priest at All Saint's, Brisbane and then returned to Longreach where he served as Rector till 2007, and lived on there to serve in a non-stipendiary ministry, until he became ill and moved to Brisbane for medical treatment. He eventually moved to Symes Grove, an Anglicare aged care facility in Taigum, Brisbane. He died in August 2013.

Alan is affectionately remembered by long standing members of the Franciscan Third Order as he served as our chaplain from 1976 – 1985 (Franciscan Gold, DenisWoodbridge).

For the years he spent in SSF both in Australia and for a short time in PNG, he is warmly remembered as very energetic, fun loving and faithful. He was an inspiration to many people. While he ceased to serve as a friar in 1997, there was a sense in which the Franciscan vision and SSF never entirely left him. It fell to Bronwyn and me to travel to Longreach on numerous occasions to sort out the rectory and Alan's goods within that old Queensland. One of the most surprising discoveries was that he had kept four brown Franciscan habits which have now been returned home to SSF!

During those last months he was visited by many friends including his good friend, Illyd Loveluck, and their laughter could be heard throughout the ward.

Alan was deeply loved by many people beyond the Third Order and particularly by people in Longreach and district in Western Queensland, and that love for him was, I am sure, a response to his generous and caring ministry.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

+Godfrey Fryar tssf
Bishop of Rockhampton.

Br Alan Barnabas

By: Val Tibbey

I first came in touch with the Third Order in Sydney through the Butterss in 1977 and Br Alan Barnabas was a familiar figure in The Order at that time. He was a delight and always a comforting and enlightening presence to have around - a good face of an Anglican friar.

Franciscan & Holy Days

To Note

December	1	Requiem for all departed Franciscans
December	25	The Nativity Of Our Lord
2014		
January	16	The First Franciscan Martyrs
February	9	Anglican Franciscan Pioneers
April	18	Good Friday
April	20	Easter Sunday
May	16	Margaret of Cortona
May	20	Bernardine of Sienna
June	13	Anthony of Padua

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

From The Community Obedience



God, we give you thanks for the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis. Grant, we pray, that being knit together in community and prayer, we your servants may glorify your holy name after the example of Saint Francis, and win others to you love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Disciples Produce Fruit

Excerpt from: Living Bulwark "The Sword of the Spirit"

December 2012 Newsletter

www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/

The Fruit of Discipleship and Love

By: Joanie Nath

The second unmistakable, distinctive mark of a disciple is the producing of fruit. "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." John 15:8. One version says, "...proving yourselves to be my disciples". In addition to the love we are to have for one another, the proof of our discipleship is in the bearing of fruit. This bearing of fruit is not limited to the fruit of a holy and virtuous life, but also of making other disciples for the Lord and His kingdom. To bear fruit is another way of saying to "reproduce". There are many factors involved in successfully making disciples for the Lord. We can read about some of them in the parable of the sower and the seed as found in Matthew 13:1-23. But, we might also reasonably deduce that if we are not reproducing by making other disciples, then the quality of our discipleship might need to be examined.

Jesus said, "Go make disciples of all men, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you." Matt 28:19a, 20a. In other words, "Teach them everything you've learned from being with me these past three years." We can't teach someone else to become something we ourselves are not. A nurse cannot teach someone how to be a dancer if she hasn't been trained in the art of dance. A master musician most likely would not be hired to teach biochemistry. If we are to make disciples, if we are to reproduce other disciples for the Lord, then we need to be disciples ourselves. And we make disciples by "teaching" them to obey all that Jesus has commanded us. "Teaching" as it is used here, means to "enrol them as a scholar". Here again we are patterning ourselves after our master rabbi who has enrolled each of us as scholars in the school of discipleship. A scholar is not necessarily someone with extraordinary intelligence although that's the way we often interpret it. Webster's defines a scholar as a learned person, someone who possesses knowledge by having given themselves to study, as opposed to just showing up in class. It has little to do with actual intelligence. It has more to do with posturing yourself with a desire to learn and giving yourself to that. We read in the fifteenth chapter of John's gospel that it is only by staying attached to the vine that the branches are able to produce fruit. Jesus told his disciples, "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me...for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:4b, 5c. To "abide" in the Greek means to stay in a given place, relationship or state of expectancy; to continue to dwell in, endure, be present to; remain, stand, and tarry long. "Abiding" is not just doing out of a sense of duty what we've been taught. It's about staying in or dwelling in a certain place, being in a certain kind of relationship with the Lord and the people He's called us to be in covenant with. It's an enduring kind of posture, tarrying long in the presence of God and with this people, having an expectation of Him and the relationship that doesn't grow weary or give up when the road is hard. "Apart from me you can do nothing." A branch out of contact with the vine or one which has been uprooted is lifeless. A disciple who has drifted or disconnected from the rabbi, one who has ceased to remain in that certain place or moved on because the waiting is long will not be able to reproduce or make other disciples. Sometimes we are tempted to "disentangle" ourselves from other parts of the vine. If we attempt to do so we risk breaking the branches; we risk our own brokenness. We need to endure in discipleship, tarrying long with the Lord in this place he has called us to. We need to "abide" in the Lord so we are able to produce fruit.



"I come, O Lord, unto Thy sanctuary to see the life and food of my soul. As I hope in Thee, O Lord, inspire me with that confidence which brings me to Thy holy mountain. Permit me, Divine Jesus, to come closer to Thee, that my whole soul may do homage to the greatness of Thy majesty; that my heart, with its tenderest affections, may acknowledge Thine infinite love; that my memory may dwell on the admirable mysteries here renewed every day, and that the sacrifice of my whole being may accompany Thine."

By: St. Clare of Assisi



Fr Robert Willson and Rev John Gibson at the Eucharist that Robert celebrated on the occasion of his 25th anniversary of profession at the Canberra Girl's Grammar School Chapel on Tuesday 15th October, 2013

Psalm 95: 1-2

King James Version

O Come, Let us sing unto the Lord,
Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation.
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms.



NSW B Regional Report

By: Rev John Gibson

For our Bathurst region and Canberra region Tertiaries we have had the opportunity for pausing and waiting upon God to be renewed and refreshed.

Our Bathurst Tertiaries met together on St Francis Day in October at the Retreat Centre Carcoar led by two of our Tertiaries. Fr John Clarkson celebrated the Eucharist outdoors in the garden. In his homily John reminded everyone that the Eucharistic Presence was very special to St Francis. Getting back to basics, the importance of our vows and rule of life was reinforced. By way of illustration, our rule is like a trellis for a climbing rose, lifting us up and providing a framework on which we can grow and flourish. Springtime is an appropriate time to talk about budding and flowering in the warmth and light of Jesus Christ. Another illustration especially if we have grandchildren, is that of a trampoline which gives buoyancy to our spiritual life in Christ.

Our Tertiary Fran Hansen who is one of the leaders of the Shalom community led 'Reflections on Creation'. The Biblical Tradition has God placing mankind in their place with stewardship of creation before God as lovers of creation; just as God loved creation. This means that humans were made to be responsible for the care and welfare of creation.

Over 800 years ago Francis recognised this and wrote the song The Canticle of the Sun. Fran showed how this beautiful lyrical poem reflects his (Francis) profound love for God's creation through his addressing the natural world as brother and sister. As a consequence of this we see evidence of the 'communal character' of creation with other creatures, as one community of creation before God. As a result we respect a uniqueness about each of us as God's creation. Therefore God's creation is designed to be what God made it and not to be exploited by man for his benefit.

Time was taken to look at the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-23) for the way in which God has endowed each one of us with a talent. We are to DO and BE as God designed and wills us. Time was taken to also look at Psalm 104.

In Canberra, our Tertiary The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Mackinlay led our annual retreat last September at the 'Gathering Place' in Dickson. Elizabeth took as her theme The journey of ageing: Growing into Christ. drawing on her personal experiences, academic work and extensive writings her addresses covered; (1) Beginning the journey [entering into retreat]. (2) Coming to know Jesus for the first time; Francis' conversion. (3) Transformation and growing into intimacy with God. (4) Our story, God's story and connecting points. (5) The final life career. Each address was followed by a reflection sheet where the questions gave us the opportunity in quietness to wait upon God, stir our imaginations/memory and draw us into deeper reflection on our own faith and development. It was great to come together from Bombala, Canberra, Cooma, Goulburn and Malua Bay.

Our congratulations to Fr Robert Willson who celebrated the Eucharist on his 25th anniversary of profession into the Third Order, at the Canberra Girl's Grammar School Chapel on Tuesday 15th October. It was very moving that 25 years on, Robert returned to the Chapel where he had made his profession. It was a great evening of thanks to God and time of fellowship. Our thanks to the school chaplain, The Reverend Paul Harris who facilitated the arrangements and made us so welcome.

At Carcoar, 'The Gathering Place' and the Girls Grammar School renewals of profession took place.

Plans are being made for Wagga Wagga region and Canberra region Tertiaries to meet together early in the new year for worship, sharing and fellowship.

This report was compiled by John Gibson TSSF and the news about the Bathurst/region from a report received by me from John Clarkson TSSF)



"Today may there be peace within.
May you trust that you are exactly
where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities
that are born of faith in yourself and others.
May you use the gifts that you have received
and pass on the love that has been given to
you.
May you be content with yourself just the
way you are.
Let this knowledge settle into your bones,
and allow your soul the freedom to sing,
dance, praise and love.,
It is there for each and every one of us".
By: St. Teresa of Avila



From the Editor

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Advent is a time of preparation through prayer and sacrifice, waiting, anticipation, reflection and promise for the coming of Our Saviour's birth. It is also a time to think of those less fortunate than we are, and to find it in our hearts to be generous.

We also share our Faith journey, and this provides information on a Regional and overseas level.

Your co-operation is proactive in providing communication to our wider community. I thank each one of you for providing information/articles, and your support in your readiness to assist me, this year.

As 2013 is coming to a close, we will be preparing for our Lenten Journey - a time of observance of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline.

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

The approximate date deadline for the Easter Edition is the 15th March, 2014.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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

Gloria

