

# *THE THIRD ORDER*

## *Australian Province Newsletter,*

### *PNG & East Asia*

*Pentecost*

*Edition*

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

POPE FRANCIS WROTE IN HIS [EVANGELII GAUDIUM IN 2013], THAT *“Each day we have the opportunity to encounter Jesus in the people we serve, and in one another.”* .. *“Our work is always and everywhere to uphold the human dignity of each person...”* Daily in this service as Christians and members of our Order, *“we run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which affects us in our close and continuous interaction.”*

He also states his and what I believe to be our mission as sisters and brothers within the life of our community and the world in which we live.

*“My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an ‘extra’ or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a*



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This Easter season reminds us that we follow a living Jesus, a Jesus of the present who lived, worked, battled and died for all, rising and giving to all of us a commission to step out in faith in his name. We as brothers and sisters of the Third order are in a world just as complex and conflicted as Jesus was and as Pope Francis has said, we have been given a mission by God to bring about change, no matter how simple that change may be in our daily lives.

Being in the world and not of it doesn't deny our commitment to the issues we are forced to confront within our own nation and the wider community and there seems to be many relating to injustice, poverty and the future of our planet that seem almost overwhelming.

**Oscar Romero** [Martyr] and Archbishop of San Salvador, in an address to his people, just before his assassination on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1980, wrote: *“The essence of the church lies in its mission to save the world in its totality, and of saving it in history, here and now. The Church exists to act in solidarity with the hopes and joys, the anxieties and sorrows, of men and women. Like Jesus, the Church was sent to ‘bring good news to the poor, heal the contract of heart, to seek and save what was lost’ To put it in one word – in a word that sums it all up and makes it concrete – the word that the church ought to serve is, for us, the world of the poor”.* *“What we say of the world of the poor is that it is the key understanding the Christian faith, to understanding the activity of the Church, and the political dimension of that faith and activity”.* *It is the poor who show us what life is whether in the city of country, “and what it means for the church really to live in that world”.*

St Francis, Pope Francis and Oscar Romero, like countless others both Saints and everyday people continually remind us of our calling to reach out to others, to fulfil the gifts given to each of us by God to bring about change in this world today and for the future in the world of tomorrow.

Each of these people, past and present, point to the marginalised in our society as the instruments guiding us in enabling the world to be a world of equality and providing all with the right to live, work, and be free to speak and to act for the good of all.

Insurmountable, impossible, what can I do? What can we do? All things we have been told are possible if we believe in the living Christ, if we as a community and as individuals focus on the Gospels as a guidelines for us to act upon. Being in the world and not of it enables each of us through prayer to see what God reveals to us, our mission to reach out to and affect change in this present time.

I was shown how this is possible when I had the opportunity to visit the township of Masipumemlele near Simon's Town in South Africa. Population in this shanty town was over 250.000. A call to action came about because in South Africa there are more than 3.4 million children under the age of 18, who are either orphaned or have lost one parent. These statistics are estimated to increase

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to 4.6 million in 2015. The St Francis Church, who cared for us during our Provincial's meeting, formed a trust in 2009 to respond to a call from the Anglican Archbishop of Cape-town who wrote in response to the almost insurmountable social issue that this country had to deal with:

*"I think first it is just a matter of knowing each other, putting a human face on our world and then as people share experiences they can seek ways to respond."*

*"Knowing what makes people tick, praying for one another, knowing our pains, sharing our joys and seeking to contribute, where possible, to uplifting people who are living in poverty..."* Because of this call to action, this one parish has established a home for 6 children and is about to build another thankfully with the support of not only the parish but the wider world community. Small steps achieving change for God and for the future of these young children who when we met them showed us their home, their one stuffed toy and the joy in our visiting them.

As members of the Franciscan family world-wide and in our local gatherings we are all called to become aware of and act upon the calls that come to our attention, of justice, peace, reconciliation and preservation of God's creation. With God and in God we all are called to be instruments of his peace opening ourselves to his presence and, fulfilling the purpose of his Kingdom in the present time.

For each member of our Order, many of whom I have had the joy to meet face to face, I call each of you to pray and to continue your mission of outreach to those in need whether in your local community or on the wider world stage. The prayer of St Francis embraces all that we should strive for with God's grace and in the time allotted to each of us. During my time as Provincial I have focussed upon how important our cycle of prayer is for each of us, knowing each day, that as we are united in prayer we joyfully pray that, *'here and in all your Churches throughout the world, we adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world'.*

Since my last report, there have been many changes, developments and possibilities for our future as an Order. At this point on behalf of all my brothers and sisters, I would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the dedication of our **Provincial Treasurer, Geoff Jordan** who has served each of us for 18 years not only in the capacity of Treasurer, but also as Archivist coping admirably with the constant changes in information technology. Geoff has been, I am sure, a brother, who by his example, has provided many of us with his generosity of spirit and his witness and love of our Lord. We wish Geoff and Fay, who has supported him, every blessing. Geoff's retirement led to the appointment of a new Treasurer. Fortunately, **Glenys McCarrick**, Regional Minister of Queensland and living near Geoff, was able to shadow and take up the ropes under Geoff's guidance, given his declining health. We are indeed grateful for Glenys's offer to step into this role and in continuing in the task Geoff has handed on to her.

This led to the need for an **Archivist**, a position that we had called for at the last Chapter. Prayers were answered. **Anne Wilson** from Western Australia, has offered to continue in this role. Thanks again to Geoff, most of our history has been downloaded and easily transferred to our new Archivist. Thank you Anne.

Chapter 2014 welcomes **new Regional Ministers** to represent their Regions. I welcome, **Sandie Oakes** from Western Australia, **Vic Hall** from Queensland A, **Jill Gumbley** from NSW and **Bronwyn Fryar** from Queensland B. A special welcome to **Bradley Sangan**, Regional Minister for Singapore/ Malaysia whom I hope will join chapter at the conference in Canberra in 2015. I thank on behalf of our community, John, Joan, and Joy, Regional Ministers who in the second term of their office and service have given dedicated service to their brothers and sisters. The role of the Regional Minister is pivotal in its support of each member both spiritually and personally and in particular providing opportunities for growth within group and individual guidance in ongoing formation based upon Franciscan spirituality. Given the implementation of our new formation notes, I would hope that all regions will spend time during meetings, revisiting formation and using these notes.

As Provincial, my role would be so much harder without the support of my **Assistant, Sandra, our Provincial Chaplain, Helen, David, Communications Secretary**, with his finger tips on all information needed and wise counsel and **Wayne as Provincial Secretary**, who stepped into a breach left by our brother David McAvenna at the end of last Chapter.

#### **Minister's Provincial meeting – August 2013, Simon's Town, South Africa**

It was a great joy for me to be able to meet with our brothers and sister Provincials in Simon's Town. During our time spent in this community, set in a rugged and beautiful landscape we were made most welcome and hosted by Nolan Tobias, Provincial of Africa. Our **Minister General, Ken Norian** led all our meetings and provided each of us with opportunity to reflect on each Province and how best we might find ways of cooperation via communication and resource availability to enable greater cohesiveness. During his term of office, Ken plans to visit all Provinces and continue to build a sense of a global community amidst all the incredible diversity of geopolitical, theological and socio-economic circumstances the order, with all its five provinces, finds itself.

**Nolan Tobias, Provincial of Africa** expressed his thanks to our provinces for the support given to the African travel fund. Given the size of his province this support has enabled him to visit all regions, despite great distances. We were, during our time spent in meeting, given the opportunity to visit the black townships, spend time in 'home grown preschools' and especially spend time with the children I have mentioned previously. These experiences made us realize how difficult, but not impossible to carry out our God's mission. Despite great poverty, the people of the black townships had great dignity and showed their faith in their building of churches within each district.

Considerable discussion focussed upon the **formation process** and the need to develop this as an ongoing and more formal process. My introduction of the draft of the new formation notes, prepared by Ted Witham was received with enthusiasm and the hope that in 2015 there could be a meeting of Formators from the 5 Provinces to work together in discussing how best formation can be implemented and developed.

Ken amplified the importance of our common prayer of Community Obedience as the most important aspect of our unity despite our diversity and distance.

**FORMATION NOTES:** We are indeed fortunate to be able at this chapter to adopt formally the work done by our Brother, Ted Witham in revisiting, revising and rewriting our formation material. In his preface on Learning theory used in this 2013 revision

he points out: "Our formation as Tertiaries will be effective as we participate in a community that does things in characteristic ways and we learn to talk about those characteristic "Franciscan" ways of following Christ. These notes provide opportunity for each of us to share together in this ministry that will lead us forward to realize that, **'what we do and what we say we do are tightly linked.'** On behalf of all our community, I thank you Ted for your commitment and dedication to this task. I also accord thanks to many tertiaries who gave Ted constructive guidance as the notes were being developed.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The appointment of **David White** as our Communications officer has possibly yet to be fully realized as David has had to hold onto his role as Provincial Secretary due to David McAvenna's sudden departure. None-the-less, David has been a great asset to our community in his role, ensuring that we are up to date with our Prayer cycle and address book and instituting new ways of formatting this important book. We have yet to embrace the Web and fulfil its potential as a means of communication and outreach. I continually hope and pray that one of our Community will assist with this role in the future. As I stated in my 2012 report, **"the ability to work with and cooperatively communicate within our Franciscan family is now possible enabling and supporting all agencies in promoting the Franciscan way of life and of sharing resources"**.

I especially accord great thanks to our **Newsletter editor, Gloria Malouf-Marsh** for her dedication in presenting each quarter our Newsletter. Her guidance and links with the Regions have provided information to be shared within the Province. At this point in its history it appears that many members of our community are now able to receive the newsletter electronically.

As Provincial, I am pleased to report that we have continued to forge stronger links either by communication or attendance at meetings with our Brothers ssf, the Franciscan Federation of Australia and ARCALA. I am pleased with the strengthening of ties and communication in FFA. This body representing both Anglican and Catholic orders is concerned with the future development of a body to take the place of Franciscan's International, now no longer based in Bangkok. The FFA is currently exploring the development of a JPIC focus possibly based within Australia and under the umbrella of 'Franciscan's International Australia'. This hopefully will continue to bring this region current awareness of issues relating to human rights, global warming and environmental degradation linking to Franciscan's International in Geneva at the United Nations.

**FINANCE:** given that we are a non-profit organisation, I thank all members for their offering to ensure that we as an Order can continue in its outreach and in the day to day management of our Province. As a Province we are committed to Franciscan Aid, the African travel fund, the work of our brothers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Order of the Divine Compassion, Franciscan's International [its role within the new structure] and Papua New Guinea.

**STATISTICS:** As at the 29<sup>th</sup> April the total membership of our Order is 298 [Australia, Malaysia/Hong Kong/Singapore/Thailand] and 109 Papua New Guinea.

- 398 professed
- This includes 23 elected to profession in PNG
- 70 novices [43 within Australia]
- 14 enquirers
- 12 associates.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** My report in April 2013 spoke of the recent trip made to the Province of Popondetta and the many needs this trip revealed. Since that time communication has been a problem and the 'Franciscan's in Mission Dinghy project', seems to have continued to have problems in achieving the goals it set out to achieve. Given this situation and other issues, I have persisted in reinforcing our commitment to the Regional Minister re this project.

**MALAYSIA/SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG [CHINA].** I am pleased to report that firm links have now been established in both areas. With the new Regional Minister in place, I have been able to establish links with Bradley Sangan. Thanks to David White's visit to Hong Kong and communications with Simon, John and Stephen we have formed stronger family ties.

Expressions of interest in our Order have also been received from a group in Sri Lanka via Brother Lionel and Brother Christopher John. I have also been in communication with a person in China. Hopefully we can give support to these requests and overcome any concerns we may have in inviting them to be part of our Franciscan family.

May we with our little brother Francis and as brothers and sisters, continue to reflect love joy, happiness and hope as we walk together in the footsteps of our Lord.

*Colin tssf Provincial Minister May 2014 [Provincial Minister's report to Chapter]*

## **ELECTED TO PROFESSION CHAPTER MAY 2014**

On behalf of us all I welcome and congratulate new members to our Franciscan family.

- Qld B: Bert Watt, Gordon Hooker, Gabrielle McGee, Raelee Garner, Val Bell, Kath Vickers, Winston Svensen, Charles Ringma.
- NSW: Peter Brunner, Angela Peverell
- Vic/Tas: Lizzie Bellhouse
- WA: Jane Hughes, Jennie Simons

### **RELEASED**

We wish Estelle Makin, Margaret Voerman, Jason Wright and Julia Smith every blessing as they continue in their journey in Christ.

## **From the Editor**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

There have been changes to the The Newsletter. It is now being printed in Booklet form, and much easier to read. This edition has very interesting articles from Chapter, and it gives one an understanding of what goes on, at a wider/global level in the Franciscan Order.

I would like to thank those who contributed to the Newsletter. Please continue to do so as this is your means of communication with community.

The requirements are 300-400 words on Word, unformatted. Please share your articles for possible inclusions.

**The deadline for the Stigmata/Francistide Edition is around 20th September, 2014. I look forward to hearing from you.**

Blessings for Pentecost,

Gloria



## 'Saint Francis – the animal whisperer'

By: Asta Lander, WA



When Francis was given a sheep as a gift, he did not kill her and serve her up as a Sunday lamb roast, but took her in and cared for her. She became a regular in the chapel, where legend has it that she worshipped our Lord.

From: "Lent with St Francis" - Daily Reflections, by Diane M. Houdek and published by Franciscan Media p91.

Saint Francis preached to the birds. Why? I have heard it said that he was annoyed that humans would not

listen to his preaching and so out of frustration (perhaps so that the people would hear what he had to say regardless) he directed his sermon to non-humans. I rather think this is used as an excuse to avoid the question of how he believed we are called to interact with God's creatures.

When the wolf at Gubbio was 'terrorizing' the townsfolk, Francis did not pick up a gun and hunt him, but acted as a mediator. When Brother Wolf's hunger was met, peace and harmony was the result. They say Saint Francis tamed the wolf. I don't think he would have liked that term, which emphasises an imbalance of power. His actions were motivated by compassion and love, and executed with respect for his needs, and those of the people involved. This well-known legend again demonstrates the spirit of Saint Francis, who was said to be the little mirror of Christ.

In the West, when our dogs die we question if they have souls. We grieve terribly for our companions, as they do if we die before them – which is worth pondering. We are horrified that in other countries dogs are on the menu. Why do we treat one species of animal this way and kill another for food, especially when there is no need. Pigs are apparently more intelligent than our canine companions, for example, and yet Australian Men's Breakfasts often consist of bacon, sausages and eggs. What makes this meal a 'hearty' macho meal? (In reality we know it is a 'heart attack' meal.) How can we, or why do we – put to the back of our mind the life of the animal we are eating?

What suffering are we consuming without any regard for the animals? And what does that do to us? As they are going through the 'conveyor belt' to their deaths, they hear the ones before them die. They fight to live. They are pushed and prodded to keep them moving. They scream. Their adrenaline must be off the scale. And we consume this fear. If we have not killed these animals ourselves, we have been responsible for others having to do this for us. There are statistics that show that towns where there are abattoirs have a greater incidence of domestic violence. Is that any surprise? In towns such as Katanning (where I was the high school chaplain) refugees, who have fled the bloodshed in their countries, often end up killing and 'processing' animals. Again they are surrounded in violence, death, and bloodshed. What does that smell like, feel like, sound like? What does this do to their souls? Where is the peace, light and hope in this work? What part of their humanity do they have to switch off inside themselves to do this work and then go home to embrace family members... to be able to sleep at night? And when they can't, what then? Many of us have seen footage of abattoir workers kicking defenceless creatures, swearing at them, and laughing at their pain. I can see why. What if they saw them as the sentient beings they are? Surely this work would destroy them.

But did Saint Francis eat animals? I suspect, given his respect for all of creation, his preference would have been to cause no harm to living beings. That he would only have accepted meat when offered it from someone else's table, as an act of humility, and perhaps sacrifice on his behalf. It is my conviction that he would not have considered it 'comfort food' and may in fact have prayed for the soul of the animal that he was to consume. I think his heart would have been heavy with grief. I certainly do not see him working in an abattoir, if he were here today, but I can see him standing looking in, sickened by the sticky red under the worker's feet, weeping tears in prayer for the humans and non-humans alike. Surely he would sit with us (as he did with the townsfolk of Gubbio) and plead with us to consider our little brothers and sisters – the animals. He would show us that there are no villains here, only victims. That he would point us to another way of being where we can live on a diet of non-violence, an oft overlooked way to contribute to world peace - an act of great love, and healing.

## Celebrating 35th anniversary of St Francis as Patron Saint of Ecology and launching of a new website

From: Justitia et Pax [mailto:pax@ofm.org]



Dear Friends,

Greetings from the JPIC Office in Rome! This year is the 35th anniversary of the naming of Saint Francis as Patron of Ecology. Romans VI (the group of JPIC animators for the Franciscan Family) has considered how best to celebrate this event, especially in the context of the worldwide environmental crisis. We have prepared a series of resources to help our brothers and sisters throughout the world commemorate this celebration.

We are very happy to announce the creation of a website containing these resources. It is being launched on March 22nd, World Water Day. The launch date reminds us that our commitment to work for the Integrity of Creation must be concrete and practical. Resources are available in various languages, and include a reflection on the celebration, the Pope's declaration naming Francis the patron of ecology, a Eucharistic celebration, an ecumenical prayer, norms for an interreligious celebration, a Mayan Cross Prayer, Prayers of the Faithful and an article on Franciscan Spirituality.

The address for the website is [www.francis35.org](http://www.francis35.org). The date for the commemoration of Francis as Patron of Ecology is November 29. We invite all of you to prepare events/prayers/gatherings to commemorate this anniversary at times which are convenient for you and your partners. You should of course include the Franciscan Family in your plans, but also be sure to invite the laity with whom you work and minister, diocesan organizations, ecumenical groups, interreligious groups and all people of goodwill. Help to promote among all people a spirit of care for creation in the spirit of Francis. You might want to consider the possibility of linking this celebration with that of the Spirit of Assisi, which occurs every year on the 28th of October.

We hope that these materials will be of use to you. Please share them as widely as possible. We ask that you send us a short article about any celebration you might hold in your city or region, along with some photos. May God bless you in your work to care for the Creation that we share as gift with all of God's creatures!

Joe Rozansky OFM and Fabio L'Amour OFM  
OFM JPIC Office, Rome

## PAX ET BONUM

From: OCEANIA NEWSLETTER

By: Fr John Cooper OFM Cap



Peace & Good is considered to be the motto of St Francis of Assisi. It certainly is a Franciscan motto.

However it does not occur in the critical editions of the writings of St Francis, although there is a tradition that he used it at the beginning of his sermons and letters.

Mottos tend to be pithy (short and compact with meaning).

PAX means PEACE

ET means AND

BONUM means GOOD

So it is translated:

PEACE AND GOOD.

The English, but especially the Americans have a problem with “substantive” nouns standing alone so they add things, like ALL GOOD. The noun “good” is usually an adjective, as in good boy, good house, and good person. However here in this motto, often used as a Franciscan greeting, the adjective becomes a noun, to be precise grammatically, a “substantive” noun. This type of noun is not usually found in 21st Century English grammars. But you find it in such lines as: He had a drink at the local before going home. “Local” is usually an adjective as in local pub. It is simple enough to say that in the case of Pax et Bonum there is no need for adding “all” as “all good” or “the” as in “the Good”. PEACE & GOOD is correct.

So Pax et Bonum is not: “Peace and all goodness to you.” It might mean that, but it could be expressed in many different ways, like: “Peace and all good health to you.” But it is simply: Peace and Good. As such it tends to suggest many things. Peace and Good reign in the Kingdom of God. Peace and Good in your heart. Of course where there is peace, the seven basic human goods can flourish. Just for the record these are:

1. Good Health
2. Growth in Knowledge
3. A sense of Play
4. Aesthetic Experience
5. Sociability or Fraternity
6. Practical Reasonableness (common sense)
7. Spirituality

## Geoff Jordan

### (Provincial Treasurer has retired)

By: Ted Witham

Provincial Minister 2006 – 2011

To my knowledge, Geoff has cared for the Province’s finances as Treasurer since 1990. The two characteristics Geoff has brought to the task are that his accounting is comprehensive and conservative.

The two reasons the Province has not gone broke in difficult economic times and the finances have thrived in easy times is that Geoff understands the complexity of all that we do as a Province and how it fits together as a ministry, and Geoff takes few risks looking after Tertiaries’ money.

In my terms on Chapter, and especially as Provincial Minister, I noted how Geoff treated the role of Treasurer as a ministry. For him, the finances are currency for achieving God’s mission among the Third Order, and furthering what the Third Order did in the wider community.

I pay tribute to Geoff’s professional attitude, prayerful and efficient carrying out of his ministry to all of us Tertiaries in Australia. It has been an extraordinary contribution to our life.

## Excerpt from: Vatican, Anglicans, Muslims sign accord against human trafficking

By: Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service – 17th March, 2014.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Vatican, The Anglican Communion and a leading Muslim institution signed a historic agreement to work together to end human trafficking worldwide by 2020.

The new accord, signed during a Vatican news conference March 17, launched the beginning of the Global Freedom Network, which hopes to expand to include all the world’s major faiths.

The global initiative aims to prevent modern forms of slavery; to protect, rescue and rehabilitate victims; and to promote concrete measures that condemn or criminalize human trafficking.

In a joint statement, the accord’s signatories called human trafficking and modern forms of slavery “crimes against humanity” and called for urgent action by all faith communities to join the effort to “set free the most oppressed of our brothers and sisters.”

“Only by activating, all over the world, the ideals of faith and of shared human values can we marshal the spiritual power, the joint effort and the liberating vision to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking from our world and for all time,” the joint statement said.

In the agreement, all parties pledged to pursue concrete plans of action as well as moments for prayer, fasting and raising awareness.

Other aims of the agreement included:

- Getting faith communities to ensure their “supply chains” and investments are free from using or profiting from slave labor.
- Getting governments and business worldwide also to “slavery proof” the goods and services they procure, produce or sell.
- Educating families, schools, worshippers and groups about how to detect and report possible instances of human slavery and trafficking.

## A new initiative

By: Bronwyn Fryar

Part of our life as members of the Third Order is to say the Community Obedience each day. Its words and prayers remind us of our life together. We intercede for one another in the different regions of our Asia Pacific Province. All of us are “knit together in community and prayer”.

At our recent Provincial Chapter meeting in Melbourne we discussed a practical expression of this Community Life. The idea was suggested to us in a paragraph in a 2013 edition of our Newsletter and arose out of an initiative of the American Third Order Province. They have produced a TSSF ID and ‘In-case-of-death’ card, available to all tertiaries in the Province. We thought that such a card is also needed in our Province where we have a number of isolated and elderly tertiaries. The need was highlighted recently by the death of a Third Order sister. A friend found her copy of the Prayer Cycle/Address Book with a card sent by a tertiary and this enabled contact to be made with the Third Order and care to be offered.

In the new Prayer Cycle and Address Book 2014 you will notice inside the front cover a paragraph titled “In case of serious illness or death”. You may like to copy this page and place it with personal papers relating to your death.

In due course all Tertiaries will also receive a laminated ID card, modelled on the similar one in the American Province.

By this we show our “special love and affection for one another”



## Day of Penitence NSW Area B

By: Lorraine Clarkson

The photo shows Fr John Gibson and Lorraine Clarkson the next morning with the San Damiano Cross.

The Franciscan Regional Minister for NSW B, Fr John Gibson, visited Bathurst recently. At the Eucharist we celebrated Day of Penitence and Fr John said in his homily that “the Day of Penitence is a day set aside to be offered to God in penitence for sin and for the healing work of reconciliation throughout the world. We observe this day, not as an opportunity to wallow around and feel sorry for ourselves, and beat our breasts, but rather so that we might have life, and have it in all fullness.” He went on to quote Susan Pitchford in her book *“Following Francis The Franciscan Way for Everyone”*. In the chapter *Penitence Show me Your Scars*, Susan drew the analogy of life like a piece of ground. If we want to grow something we make sure it has plenty of dirt, add manure and then stir it up and turn it over. It can be a messy business, but it is into the places that are broken open that we place the seed - the seed that will produce new life. She goes on to emphasise God’s ability to make use of our brokenness, to redeem our hurts and failures and to use them to shape us into the people he always meant us to be. Fr John retold the famous story of Br Francis confronting the bloodthirsty wolf which had been terrorising the people of Gubbio. As the wolf lunged at him Francis called the wolf “Brother Wolf” and commanded it not to harm anyone. A deal was proposed and reconciliation between the villagers and the wolf was agreed upon where the villagers would provide food for the wolf for the rest of its life and all would live in peace together. John went on to say that it is into the wounds that we bear that God can plant the seed of hope, of healing and reconciliation. At the end of the service he blessed the San Damiano Cross generously sent by Sue Chapman Melbourne after she read about the fire which destroyed St Barnabas Church South Bathurst. In her card Sue wrote of how the San Damiano Cross spoke so powerfully to Francis and that we, as a group, may have it where ever we meet this year. It also reminds us of the prayers and messages of support sent by so many of our brothers and sisters around Australia. For the interest of all Franciscans, most of the burnt rubble at St Barnabas has been cleared away, some walls have support structures along side them and plans are underway for rebuilding. While the exterior has to fit the heritage style it was first built in, the interior will be different. The evening finished in The Abbott Room All Saints Cathedral with a “hearty bowl” of soup and Fr John answering questions and sharing the plans so far for the General Chapter which will take place in Canberra next year.

### The Second Aim of The Order To spread the spirit of love and harmony

Members of The Third Order fight against all injustice in the name of Christ, in whom there can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for in him all are one. Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity, which see others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfilment.

## Mirror of the Cross

By: Gordon Hooker

As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see gazing back at me, an earth in pain an environment  
fighting for survival.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see gazing back at me, a caged hen pleading for her dignity.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see the face of a slave willing me to allow her to go home.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see the face of Jesus reflected in the eyes of the oppressed.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see daffodils growing tall in a meadow green.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see the leper gazing into the eyes of Francis on the road  
to Assisi.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see the body of Christ gazing back at me.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see an infant waiting to be born.  
As I gaze into the mirror of the cross,  
I see one created in the image of God

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## Uniting Green Update

11 April 2014

The Uniting Church in  
Australia

QUEENSLAND SYNOD

By: Bruce Mullan

Research Officer / Uniting Green Liaison

Uniting Green Updates are for those who strive to live sustainably and exercise responsible environmental care as a legitimate expression of their Christian mission.

Greetings,

I am always proud to be part of a church which in its first public statement in 1977 expressed what would be an abiding concern with the wellbeing of the planet for the rights of future generations. In part, the Statement to the Nation read: “we are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth’s resources for their use and enjoyment.”

Every blessing

In his General Audience on 5 June 2013 last year Pope Francis **talked about a “culture of waste”**. He said: “This culture of waste has also made us insensitive to wasting and throwing out excess foodstuffs, which is especially condemnable when, in every part of the world, unfortunately, many people and families suffer hunger and malnutrition. There was a time when our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any left-over food. Consumerism has induced us to be accustomed to excess and to the daily waste of food, whose value, which goes far beyond mere financial parameters, we are no longer able to judge correctly. Let us remember well, however, that whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor, from the hungry! I ask everyone to reflect on the problem of the loss and waste of food, to identify ways and approaches which, by seriously dealing with this problem, convey solidarity and sharing with the underprivileged.”





## Pilgrimage and Pentecost

By: Cathy Matthews

This child was born of Christian stock,  
Her memories are so strong  
Of Father Hope, of music, mist,  
Of scent that 'there' belonged.

The school years brought long evenings  
With parents far away.  
Sport, learning, and fond friendships  
bloomed  
As Francis watched our days.

His mural overshadowed,  
His influence undenied.  
In daily prayer and stories  
His example was applied.

As nature, walks and birdlife  
Dominated our weekends,  
The fireside evenings also,  
Like a compline, made amends.

With adulthood came mentors,  
Rosie, Jeannie, Mandy, more.  
Their modelling and their calling,  
Showed me what could be in store.

In preparing as a novice,  
A humbling, rocky path,  
Always, there lay a sense of peace  
Of Franciscan home and hearth.

The Tertiary existence,  
So different for us all,  
Our office brings us close in prayer  
Each day, through Spring and Fall.

We know our God who loves us so,  
His son, who gave his life.  
We feel their strong redeeming love.  
They share our joys and strife.

But Pentecost reminds us of  
The Holy Spirit's force.  
The presence, and omnipotence  
Like thread it runs life's course.

From baptism to last rights,  
The sense of the divine,  
In mornings, sunshine, rain and stars,  
Every grape upon the vine.

Each hymn inspired, each easel touched,  
Each word upon a page,  
The Holy Spirit weaves the gifts  
Through life at every stage.

Our days begin in wonderment  
At sunshine raised anew  
And end with our thanksgiving  
The daytime hours are through.

Our human life path is sustained  
By a force our bodies 'breathe'.  
That Holy Spirit in our life  
Fulfil's our every need.

We are forever pilgrims,  
Franciscan pathways walked before.  
Our learning comes from listening  
To teachers gone before.

Examples all around us,  
Opportunities to grow  
As servants of our Dear Lord,  
Who dies, yet loves us so.

He lives so still amongst us,  
In the faces seen each day.  
If only we saw in each face  
His message for our way.

So, during time of Pentecost  
We live Third Order aims  
To study, pray and work and give  
This season as our frame.

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## Third Order 2015 Conference - Preliminary Information - October 1st - 4th, 2015

By: John Gibson - Regional Minister NSW B/ACT



**Date:** Thursday 1st October to Sunday 4th October, 2015.

**Registrations** from 2.00pm on the afternoon of the 1st and departing after lunch on the 4th.

**Venue:** Canberra Grammar School, Monaro Crescent, Red Hill, ACT 2603.

**Theme:** Will be built around Harmony. Worship, Bible studies, keynote addresses, workshops and time for group presentations will make up a lively and varied programme. Saturday afternoon will be given over to sightseeing and I am pretty sure that Floriade will still be on, a spring festival of mass plantings of flowers with a theme and associated activities. It is also important that we have time for fellowship. General Chapter will be held on the Sunday morning.

**Costing:** Is currently being worked out and you will be advised in good time so that the opportunity will be there to pay in full or by instalments. There will be the option to live in or out.

**Accommodation:** There are two boarding houses which together hold 90 people in single rooms. There are three levels in each house. Those of you where mobility is an issue will receive preference for ground floor rooms. The three levels have share bathrooms on each level. There is a common room on two levels with TV and a larger common room with kitchenette, large lounge area with TV, DVD and Foxtel.

**Conference Venue:** Will be the War Memorial Hall and Foyer for registration, morning and afternoon teas. The stage in the Hall has audio visual facilities and there will be plenty of room to split into small groups.

**Dining Hall:** The school has onsite caterers and we are currently negotiating with them.

**Chapel of Christ The King:** Where our services will be held. The Sunday will be St Francis Day and a highlight will be making our Renewals together.

**Parking:** For those coming by car there are good onsite parking facilities.

**Note the date and we look forward  
to welcoming you.**

## The Dark Night of Soul – continues

By: Terry Gatfield, tssf

Third Order Franciscans have been journeying for some time with the article on the Dark Night of the Soul. Many people of God have encountered the gift and all evidence suggests it was not unknown to our St Francis. However, it has been suggested that not all need to go through the experience. In previous conversations I have outlined the biblical understanding for the Dark Night and examined something of the mystery enacted in our contemporary environment. We conclude the story in this edition.

How long does a person stay in the Dark night?

The length of the Dark Night journey rests with God but maybe significantly linked to the dependent condition of the false-self, and especially that part fed by the ego. Matters of the soul need to be shaped and redeemed as a person moves into a richer spiritual consciousness and deeper ministry. I have noticed that, especially amongst men, the more significant the false-self is, and the more power that the ego has, the longer and deeper is the Dark Night journey. The ego is an incredibly powerful monster to hold in check. There is no answer to the question of - How Long?

From whence cometh my help?

All of the best secular, and well-meaning Christian, counselling may be of little value when the Dark Night of the Soul is entered. Examine the condition of Job and his loving supporters. A close encounter with the text shows the incredible and insightful counselling of his friends. Much of it appears to be sound textbook reasoning but Job is not impressed with their pseudo-religious clinical responses. Job is never convinced by the amateur wisdom of his counsellors while his argument and engagement with God never ceased. His deep honest questions constantly surfaced and his own vulnerability slowly emerged. Perhaps the final condition in chapter 40 is his calling card:

I'm speechless, in awe – words fail me.  
I should never have opened my mouth!  
I've talked too much, way too much  
I'm ready to shut up and listen

Time, trust and an openness to listen seems to be the only equipment worth depending on when experiencing the Dark Night. The rest is over to God – but that is not a bad place to be. God, who is the author, pioneer and perfecter of our faith declares this to the writer of the book of Hebrews. We are in his hands.

Transformation follows the Dark Night. This is wonderfully portrayed by Gerald May:

The goal of the transformation, the dawn after the [dark] night, consists of three precious gifts for the human soul. First, the soul's deepest desire is satisfied. Freed from the idolatries of their attachments, individuals are able to be completely in love with God and to love their neighbours as themselves. This love involves one's whole self: actions and as well as feelings. Second, the delusion of separation from God and creation is dispelled; slowly one consciously realises and enjoys the essential union that has always been present.

The third part is active participation with God. Here we not only recognise our own beauty and precious nature, but we also share God's love and compassion for others in real, practical service in the world.

Quite often the Dark Night experience is accompanied by an epiphany, yet at other times it may take the form of a more gradual awakening. A higher level, and a richer and deeper spiritual consciousness can then emerge leading us into more contemplative territory. This gives way to a higher degree of willingness and welcoming. Personal goals are often subsumed and replaced by simple thankful prayers. We are unlikely to be found not in a new action program, but rather in a new relationship with the Trinity where personal fragility, vulnerability and discernment become welcome close friends. For some we meet our lover in a renewed way - perhaps for many it is for the first time.

Perhaps the wonder of the writer of the Song of Solomon comes home:

My lover spoke and said to me,  
“Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me.  
See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.  
Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come,  
the cooing of doves is heard in our land.  
The fig tree forms its early fruit;  
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.  
Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.” (210-13)

The series of readings have been distilled from a more comprehensive essay. If any readers are interested in the full article please contact Terry Gatfield. The author's email is [t.gatfield@griffith.edu.au](mailto:t.gatfield@griffith.edu.au)

### Pentecost Sunday

(A Reading from the Office of the Passion)  
From: Franciscan Readings 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2008

Cry out with joy to the Lord,  
all the earth,  
chant a psalm to his name  
give glory to his praise.  
Say to God: how awesome are  
your works, O Lord,  
your enemies shall fawn upon you  
in the greatness of your strength.  
Let all the earth adore you and sing  
a psalm to you,  
let us chant a psalm to your name!  
May all the tribes of the Lord be  
blessed in him  
and all nations will glorify him.  
Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,  
who alone does great wonders.

### Galatians: 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the  
Spirit is love, joy, peace,  
longsuffering, gentleness,  
goodness, faith,  
23 meekness, temperance:

