



The Province of Asia-Pacific NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THAILAND & SRI LANKA

Stigmata/Francistide Edition

PROVINCIAL MINISTER'S LETTER SEPTEMBER 2015.

Single minded commitment

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I have recently returned from two Franciscan journeys... The first was to New Zealand to attend the international Provincial Minister's Meeting and the second to the 'holy of holies' of Franciscan places, Assisi in Umbria where I served for several weeks as Chaplain for SSF, and locum for the Bishop in Europe to the small English speaking Anglican congregation that gathers weekly in St Leonardo's Church, by kind arrangement with the local Bishop of Assisi.

While there is no need for Franciscans to visit Assisi, and most in fact never do, the continued life of this little hill town, which can be tapped into from a distance or in a visit serves as a reminder of the extraordinary commitment of Francis and Clare whose basilicas and burial places are at either end of Assisi. Pilgrims and curious tourists flock there wanting to connect or find out something about these wonderful saints who continue to point people to selfless lives that, with God, can make a difference.

In New Zealand I was reminded that our community of professed tertiaries around the world numbers 3075 of which 361 of us are in the Asia Pacific Province.

Provincial Ministers shared stories of extraordinary members of the third order who by their life and Franciscan commitment enrich and inspire the life of the Church and their local communities. It would be wonderful if people could say that of each of us.

One of our discussions revolved around the question, "Do we live under a vow or a pledge?"

The Provincial Minister's resolved it as follows.

The terms vow and pledge which appear in the Order for Admissions at Profession are interpreted as follows: a Tertiary's vow is made to serve God in a particular calling. At the same time, a pledge is made to the Order to keep the rule of Life which gives effect to the vow.

In the Third Order, the vow is made with a lifelong intention, whereas the pledge is made and renewed for a year at a time. The effect of this is two-fold. First, it allows the Order to respect the lifelong intention, and to permit the vow, but to give it effect only one year at a time, so that it is possible for a Tertiary to take on and fulfil a lifelong dedication, provided he or she renews regularly.



Because vows have been made, the few who subsequently may choose to leave the Third Order can only formally do so when they are Released from their vows by Chapter.

We are now coming up to our annual time of renewal around Francistide.

We sometimes get into a muddle about renewals.

Their period of time in terms of renewals is from one Francistide to the next, i.e. this year from September/October 2015 to September/October 2016. The financial contribution we make each year, and our reporting on is related to what we have already done in the time before our annual renewal, so that for example in the report we send to our Regional Minister later this year after our renewal, we refer to the financial commitment we made to the Third Order earlier in this current year. The report itself is a retrospective report.

Though we are a community in dispersion we are not called to live as if being a member of the Third Order was a purely private spiritual affair.

Renewals are community events and except for circumstances of age or infirmity or isolation, all renewals should take place at Regional Community gatherings. All renewals should have been completed before Christmas at the latest.

I am inspired by the single minded commitment of my fellow tertiaries, who, particularly in their dedication to our common life, show forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit of love, joy and humility, fruit which are nourished by God in context of community.

As our Principles remind us:

.. when these characteristics are evident throughout the Order, its work will be fruitful.

Pace e bene as we approach Francistide ,

+Godfrey tssf.



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

St John's Cathedral, Hong Kong A Service of Peace & Reconciliation

at a time of division in Hong Kong
Excerpts of Service on 14th June 2015

Sent from Simon Fong

Opening Hymn

How good it is, what pleasure comes
When people live as one;
When peace and justice light the way
The will of God is done.

True friendship then like fragrant oil
Surrounds us with delight;
And blessings shine like morning dew
Upon the mountain height.

How good it is when walls of fear
Come tumbling to the ground;
When arms are changed to farming tools
The fruits of life abound.

What quiet joy can bloom and grow
When people work for peace,
When hand and voices join as one
That hate and strife may cease.

By: Ruth Duck

The officiant introduces the service.

Sisters and brothers, we come together this evening at a time of division in our city. We live in a world of both hatred and love, violence and kindness, oppression and liberation, war and peace, nightmares and dreams. In this confused and conflicting world, at this hour, we stand for peace and reconciliation among peoples and in our hearts.

Gospel Reading - Mark 12: 13-17

The chief priests, the scribes and the elders sent to Jesus some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. And they came and said to him, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?' But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, 'Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a coin and let me see it.' And they brought one. Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' They answered, 'The emperor's.' Jesus said to them, 'Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' And they were utterly amazed at him.

"And St. Francis added: "My dear and beloved Brother, the treasure of blessed poverty is so very precious and divine that we are not worthy to possess it in our vile bodies. For poverty is that heavenly virtue by which all earthly and transitory things are trodden under foot, and by which every obstacle is removed from the soul so that it may freely enter into union with the eternal Lord God. It is also the virtue which makes the soul, while still here on earth, converse with the angels in Heaven. It is she who accompanied Christ on the Cross, was buried with Christ in the Tomb, and with Christ was raised and ascended into Heaven, for even in this life she gives to souls who love her the ability to fly to Heaven, and she alone guards the armor of true humility and
c h a r i t y . "

- Francis of Assisi, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*

HOLY HOSPITALITY

By: Roselind Ruwoldt

Holy Hospitality is the loving acceptance of all kinds of people. It involves the gift of serving, and showing tangible love for one another, and making people feel safe and included. Holy Hospitality does not see colour or class.

St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (1531-1617) was a Spanish lay brother. He was the door keeper, whose job was to answer the door bell. He always pictured the ringer as Christ seeking admittance and would go to answer the door with a cheerful "I'm coming Lord." Holy Hospitality is more than good manners; it is about seeing the face of Christ in one another.

Monasteries in the Middle Ages showed hospitality as each person who entered was given food and bed. During the crusades hospices were transformed into care centres for the wounded. After the crusades these places became places for travellers, and the beginning of hospitals.

Both the Old and New Testaments have many passages about welcoming the stranger as a guest. The teachings of Jesus extend this tradition, and he spent time befriending the outcasts, the marginalised, the children, women, tax collectors, the poor, lepers, prostitutes and even enemies. In the Kingdom of God there are no foreigners, and no borders, perhaps this is a lesson for today as we consider the refugees and the boat people. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." (St. Mathew 25.35)

The real challenge for us, the spiritual heavy lifting, comes when we encounter people who appear to be different from ourselves. We need to practice openness to people who make us uncomfortable, people who come from a different ethnic background, people a lot older or younger, people who are gay, straight, or conservative; people who believe crazy things or are mentally ill. When we welcome what is uncomfortable, we grow.

Another thought regarding hospitality is the hospitality we extend to God. St. Francis, in this Rule of 1221 wrote, "We should make a dwelling place within ourselves where He can stay, He who is the Lord God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

This can be hard, as we sometimes welcome God into only part of our lives, i.e. we welcome God into the sitting room, but forget to show him the back untidy spare room. God is a gracious guest and does not enter until we invite. "Here I stand knocking at the door: if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sit down to supper with him and he with me." (Revelation 3.20).

A brief thought regarding God's hospitality: Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" (St. John 14 2-3).

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is
neither fear nor ignorance. – St Francis
From: Franciscans Day by Day - August 25

**TSSF -
NSW B Region,
ACT Area
Annual Retreat**

By:
Graeme and Kathy Dunn.



The NSW B /ACT Region held their annual retreat recently at The Gathering Place in Canberra. This venue has been used by the Franciscans for many years and is one which draws us back each time. We are always warmly met by Brigidine Sister Lorraine who looks after us so well and with so much love. Lorraine has become such a part of us that she is invited to all our meals and comes to the Sunday Eucharist. Meryl who serves with Sr. Lorraine as a co-facilitator also greeted us over the weekend.

We had about 10 people in attendance which varied over the weekend and our Eucharist and lunch on the Sunday saw 16 people in attendance.

This year's retreat as well as having our Canberra and Goulburn members in attendance saw two tertiaries from Wagga attend and 2 enquirers also came along.

Our retreat leader was our own Tertiary Theresa Angert- Quilter and the theme for the weekend was "Meditation and Prayer". Theresa conducted a Meditation session at last year's retreat which was very warmly received so the decision was made to have this as our theme this year. The sessions were devoted to meditation techniques as we sought a closer and more personal relationship with God. Many of the group agreed that our busyness of life can distract us from the important things of life, ie: prayer life and being alone with God without distraction. In meditation we can go to "our own space" and be completely alone with God, to talk to God and have that special feeling of closeness.

Those who attended enjoyed these sessions and felt that it helped them greatly as part of their spiritual journey.

Another highlight of the weekend was the presentation by Theresa of a gift of a Communion Set for the NSW B/ACT Region. The Regional Minister will be the custodian of the set which will be used at all Franciscan Eucharists. In particular the Chalice is beautiful with its design and vibrant colours.

The retreat concluded with a Eucharist and lunch. It was a wonderful weekend and one which left people committed to coming back next year.

Yes we have already booked The Gathering Place for our retreat in 2016 which will be held from the 14th to 16th October.

Any Third Order tertiaries from elsewhere visiting our region are most welcome to our gatherings. Please contact us for details.

Graeme and Kathy Dunn tssf
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**Franciscan & Holy Days To Note
2015**

- October 3 Transitus
- October 4 FRANCIS OF ASSISI
- October 11 All Franciscan Saints
- November 1 All Souls day
- November 2 All Saints Day
- November 8 John Duns Scotus
- November 16 St Agnes of Assisi
- November 19 Elizabeth of Hungary
- November 23 Fr Algy SSF
- December 1 Requiem for all departed Franciscans
- December 8 Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- December 25 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

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

Community Obedience - Android Edition

Gordon Hooker tssf

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

For those who like to use the android edition of community obedience I have added a new feature that you may be interested in trying out. I got tired of keeping a separate application for my personal prayers and I prefer to include my personal intercession list as part of my daily community obedience prayer time, so I added a new feature that allows you maintain your personal prayers in text files and have them read into community obedience. What you need to do is create 6 text files strictly named:

- daily.txt
- sunday.txt
- monday.txt
- tuesday.txt
- wednesday.txt
- thursday.txt
- friday.txt
- saturday.txt

Text file names pretty much speak for themselves but you need to ensure you use lower case and for every day and those you only wish to include on a given day of the week are added to the day specific file. Copy these files into your downloads directory on your android phone or tablet and if you have done this correctly your personal prayers will show up after our community intercessions and before the 3rd Order collect.

This feature is only available for the android version which can be downloaded from

<http://www.tssf.org.au/downloads>.

Enjoy and blessings,

Collect

God, by the life of blessed Francis you moved your people to a love of simple things: may we, after his example, hold lightly to the things of this world and store up for ourselves treasure in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

My Letter to Br Boniface Kyalo OSF

By: Mac Campbell

Great News!

I'm about to be professed as a secular! On Saturday June 13th!

When I was a guest scholar at the Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury, in the Portiuncula house where we lived, you and Benjamin and Martin were quite right in your judgement, that I should become a Franciscan, that my head was already in that place.

I think I told you that when I returned to Australia, not only did I get married, but I also found myself quickly drawn to broken people, attracted, wanting to make friends with folk who are looked down upon. You encouraged me to see that as a way of Christ, a way of Francis. You, Boniface, gave me the theory and then the practice was an exact fit for the thinking I had.

I think about you every day, dear old friend.

I've been meaning since January to set aside time to write an account of my doings, to put you in the picture.

Pretty much washed up as a scholar, me. I never amounted to much. No more conferences, no more travel, no more writing, no more articles for journals. I'm too busy.

Doing what? Ah, that's exciting!

Remember Francis and the leper? Remember all you told me you wanted to go back to Kenya and be like that? To kiss lepers? Well, friend, that happened to me.

Remember the joy Francis offered to his brothers who would seek the company of friends whom others looked down upon? I have learned that joy! I have made many friends who have mental issues with many labels, and in them I find the touch of sweet glory, the breath of the Saviour!

My daily life is mostly contemplative. I spend a lot of time working at home in our lovely garden. I'm building some garden steps, up to number four out of seven. We grow food and flowers. My wife Dominique goes off most days, to teach theology in Professional Development workshops for teachers. We live in a family community - we in the downstairs part of a big house, and upstairs live some of our children and grandchildren.

My spiritual director is Roberta, an aboriginal woman who doesn't read. Roberta spent twenty years in a lock-up ward in a hospital for the mentally ill, where many times she had electric shock treatment to her head. Roberta suffered unspeakable cruelties that she won't talk about, in that lock-up ward. Roberta hears voices and spends a couple of weeks every year in a psychiatric facility, and often has bad days.

But Roberta somehow knows Jesus better than me. I don't know how, but it is.

I have many friends like Roberta. Some of them can be violent. Some have been in jail for hurting people. Most of them have been written off by their families, who found it all just too hard after years of doing their best. Yet, my friends are beautiful. They carry with them the stink of Christ. I saw Freddy, for example, wipe the vomit off the beard of his dying friend Otto, so he could kiss him. So you see where I found Jesus, right there, just where you said He would be, friend Boniface.

I can't thank you enough.



Curtains Wanted for Old Monastery, Stroud

By: Elizabeth Corah

My name is Elizabeth Corah. I have been in the Third Order for some time now and have had an interest in the Old Monastery since 2007. As a member of the Friends of the Monastery Committee I have taken on the task of renewing the curtains.

The calico curtains at the Old Monastery in Stroud are years old and are suffering sun damage. There are 16 bedrooms, 6 lounge windows and the corridor to do, over 100 meters of fabric in all!!

Rejoice Rejoice again I say Rejoice!!!

Due to the very generous donations from people on the Central Coast we now have all the curtains and fabric we need at present.

We do however need money to buy and fit curtain tracts so the curtains will hang well.

Donations of money need to be forwarded to The Friends of the Monastery Stroud bank account BSB 032-505 Account Number 182563 Please quote Curtains.

Any moneys left over will go towards renewing cushions and cleaning upholstery.

Thank you

Elizabeth

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Third Order Hospitality

By: Sandra Jackson

Some TSSF members have indicated that they are unsure what Third Order Hospitality entails. Two years ago Chapter approved a scheme whereby tertiaries who are happy to offer short-term hospitality to other tertiaries who are travelling can indicate this by a house symbol against their name in our Address List.

The intent is that such hospitality be of a limited, short-term duration, and would only happen when mutually convenient. Indicating in the Address List that you are interested in offering hospitality is done on the understanding that circumstances change and that it may not be possible to have a guest just when someone asks to stay with you.

Each year, when you fill out your annual subscription form, you can indicate whether or not you would like to participate in this Third Order hospitality scheme.

My Franciscan Journey

By Susan Blackall

'As I begin this article, I am sitting at my table on a Summer evening in July. Looking out of my window on the sun shining across the expanse of lawn, mown only yesterday, with dappled shade from our orchard trees. The whole scene is a reminder of how beautiful our world is and how privileged I am to be custodian of this small part of our Creator God's world.

My Franciscan journey began nearly 10 years ago, through a dear friend of mine, who had been a Third Order Franciscan for many years. We belonged to the same walking group at the time and I was so intrigued to know what gave her the inner glow and peace, that she conveyed through her Sunday worship when, as our Lay Reader, she delivered her Intercessions during Morning Service. Gradually, I learned about the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, as she answered questions that I put to her. I was introduced to Brothers and Sisters of our Devon Area, when the occasions arose, and an introduction to our Area Formation Guardian was arranged. This was the life changing occasion for me. Having delivered my life's Spiritual Journey, which in my mind was so very ordinary, having been brought up in a Christian home, I always knew Jesus Christ, but I became aware that my path was about to change. In my Worship and Prayer I felt a need and calling to follow in the footsteps of St Francis. To adopt his values, to wear the cloak of Humility, Love and Joy; to follow the three ways of Service, Prayer, Study and Work.

I attended an Area Meeting in October 2012, and the following June was invited as Postulant. The following year I was accepted as Novice, and in September of this year I am to be Professed. During the past three years, I have grown in my faith, my love for my Sisters and Brothers, my realisation of the gift of Prayer and my need to always hold God in my heart, wherever I may be, whatever my circumstance.

I have been truly blessed that I have the fellowship of Brothers and Sisters within the Province of Aisa-Pacific as well as my own European Province. How rich my life has become, how I value so much that which God has given to me. I can only humbly thank him, and all those fellow TO's who have guided me along the path in St Francis's footsteps. I wonder if I shall ever be worthy of this gift. I know it is a Franciscan's joy to always share God's blessing and this is truly my mission.

Many are called, few are chosen. I humbly thank Our Lord, Jesus Christ, for allowing me to be part of this wonderful Community, content in the knowledge that I may worship from the bottom of the Mountain.'

Thank you Gloria. I do hope to meet up with you all next year.

I wonder if you would be able to convey my wish to offer hospitality to any fellow Franciscan's who may be travelling to my part of England. There are three of us Third Orders within 5 minutes of each other, and each of us could offer accommodation. We live in a beautiful area of this part of Devon. Our fellowship extends with love.

I send love and God's Blessings to all.



The Beginning of the Legend of St Clare, Virgin

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!
Place your soul in the brilliance of glory.
Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance!
And transform your entire being in the image of the Godhead itself through contemplation.

So that you too may feel what His friends feel as they taste the hidden sweetness that God Himself has reserved from the beginning for those who love him

Totally love Him.
He, who gave Himself totally for your love.
Whose beauty the sun and the moon admire.
Whose rewards are without end;
I am speaking of Him
Who is the Son of the Most High,
Whom the Virgin brought to birth.

He Who is the truth has said:
Whoever loves me will be loved by My Father,
and I too shall love him,
and we shall come to him
and make Our dwelling place with him.

Cling to Him, therefore, with all your heart,
since it is He who is the splendor of eternal glory,
the brilliance of eternal light
and the mirror without blemish.

Gaze upon that mirror each day,
and continually study your face within it.
Indeed, blessed poverty, holy humility,
and inexpressible charity are reflected in that mirror,
as, with the grace of God,
you can contemplate them throughout the entire mirror.

A Celtic Prayer

Deep peace of the running waves to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the Son of peace to you.



Our Brother Francis – madman or hippy or something else?

By: Margaret Holt

Years before I became a Third Order Franciscan I was studying for a Bible and Ministry Diploma at a Bible College in the city. I expressed one day that St Francis of Assisi was one of my heroes and one of the lecturers exclaimed: “what! Assisi? That madman?!” His contempt was rather obvious in the way he spat out the word ‘Assisi’ rather than use Francis’ name. He made it quite clear that for him Francis was just a crazy person, abusing his body in misguided penance who didn’t know the scriptures or preach the gospel in truth, and as for the stigmata... (I do get the uncomfortable feeling sometimes that there are people who believe that there were no real Christians between 300 AD and the Reformation!)

Then I recorded the Zefferelli movie recently, ‘Brother Sun, Sister Moon’ which had some very beautiful moments but made me think again how, like the lecturer, they have missed the very essence of who Br Francis was and why he took the path he did. There are some lovely scenes in this movie of Francis and his ‘poor little brothers’ laughing together, even in their hunger and cold and deprivation, and it captured well their love for each other that bound them together. It seemed, uncomfortably to me however, to avoid any focus on the one person who was the very centre and the very reason for that love – Jesus Christ, whom Francis loved with a total abandonment and passion. This was also obvious in the changing of the words of the Canticle Brother Sun, Sister Moon which is the theme song. While one can understand the commercial reasons for this I again thought how this image of Francis can give people the impression that Francis was a tree-hugging, dancing/singing nature lover who had a vague religious attachment along the way!

As I have read more and more about Br Francis I have been struck by his total Christ-centeredness and, although passionate, eccentric and determined in his individual following of the gospel, he always showed orthodoxy in his Christian faith and in his respect and support for the Church.

Francis did realise in later years that the abuse of his body in actual fact was counter-productive in his work for the Lord and yes, Francis was suspicious of books and too much learning but this was because he wanted to get out there and live the Gospel not spend his life reading and studying it. Francis longed for the contemplative life. He ultimately brought this to God and was told by our Lord that he must continue to actively preach the Gospel. He wandered the towns preaching Jesus, and his passion was so great that both rich and poor encountered the living Christ and desired to follow Jesus in the example of Francis. One of the things that touched me deeply in my journey to becoming a Franciscan (while on retreat in a Syrian Monastery) was the encounter between Francis and the Sultan during one of the Crusades. In fearlessly preaching the gospel of Christ, with a love and respect that greatly impressed the Sultan, Francis witnessed to the love, grace and beauty of Christ amidst an atmosphere of war, desecration and hatred.

Francis was totally Christ centred, passionately in love with Jesus, living humbly and in poverty, without greed or desire for power or status. In this, of course, he imitated our Lord Jesus who, possessing the heart of God himself, was the ultimate example to us of walking the path of humility, love and joy. Our Br. Francis desired above all in his life to make Christ known, loved and adored. In this he inspired all those around him. He has inspired me and this is why I am a Franciscan...

“ The Portiuncula”

From the Franciscan Book of Prayer
(The following is an excerpt from:
the Major Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure.)

“The Portiuncula was an old church dedicated to the Virgin Mother of God which was abandoned. Francis had great devotion to the Queen of the world and when he saw that the church was deserted, he began to live there constantly in order to repair it. He heard that the Angels often visited it, so that it was called Saint Mary of the Angels, and he decided to stay there permanently out of reverence for the angels and love for the Mother of Christ.

He loved this spot more than any other in the world. It was here he began his religious life in a very small way; it is here he came to a happy end. When he was dying, he commended this spot above all others to the friars, because it was most dear to the Blessed Virgin.

This was the place where Saint Francis founded his Order by divine inspiration and it was divine providence which led him to repair three churches before he founded the Order and began to preach the Gospel.

This meant that he progressed from material things to more spiritual achievements, from lesser to greater, in due order, and it gave a prophetic indication of what he would accomplish later. As he was living there by the church of Our Lady, Francis prayed to her who had conceived the Word, full of grace and truth, begging her insistently and with tears to become his advocate. Then he was granted the true spirit of the Gospel by the intercession of the Mother of mercy and he brought it to fruition. He embraced the Mother of Our Lord Jesus with indescribable love because, as he said, it was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother, and through her we found mercy. After Christ, he put all his trust in her and took her as his patroness for himself and his friars.”

* * * * *

We are the mother of Christ when we carry him in our heart and body of love and a pure and sincere conscience. And we give birth to him through our holy works which ought to shine on others by our example.
- St Francis
From: *Franciscans day by Day – May 19*

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

A Reflection - “ a he became truly human”

By: Alan Bentley

I guess that I have read this phrase from the Creed hundreds of times over my lifetime and like so many words that we mouth within the Eucharist service we deal with them without much thought and move on to keep pace with the need to finish the service near the expected time. Sad.

He became truly human, this means to a common man like myself that he went through all the pain, discomfort, achievements, and pleasure that a child would address during the course of his growing to maturity.

He evidenced his knowledge of his special relationship with God, when at twelve years, in the temple he reminded his parents that he was about “ his father’s business “, and again when Mary asked him to turn water into wine at Cana he stated “ my time has not yet come “

With such knowledge in his heart he grew through teens into manhood in his home village, as far as we know. As eldest son, after Joseph had died, he had the care of Mary and his brothers and sisters, maintaining a home for them. One assumes he operated a carpentry trade in the area until he commenced his ministry after his baptism. ‘We can see throughout the Gospels where his human nature was sorely tested, how often we read, “ He was weary “ or “ He withdrew from the crowd to rest and pray “. Until that final indignity to his human nature, His Passion and Cross, which by calling upon His divine power He could have avoided. He chose to stay human for our souls. Care for Mary too was very evident as he ensured, even in his last agonizing hours, that she was not to be left alone.

Jesus was highly intelligent from boyhood conscious of a special role in the life of his people as directed by God, so he would have been aware of his need to be strong in resisting sin in whatever form Satan would attack this human being. As an old sinner my mind boggles with the tests that he must have put up with.

The men that he approached to support him when he commenced his ministry and even those people that he had dealt with right up until his death would not accept a wishy washy individual. He presented as the sum total of his human life experience, plus his divine being, to be so acceptable to and approachable by all, even his worst enemies could not ignore him.

If Jesus had come to earth as God or as anything other than a human being he would have generated all sorts of emotions many false that would have not resulted in the Church being created and sustained over the 2000 years.

There are many ways that we can probe his humanity and still come back to his great love for and guidance to us, there is nothing in human life that he has not addressed, and as far as sin is concerned he will not allow us to be tested beyond our capacity to resist if we apply ourselves and ask him for relief.

He loves our service but hates our suffering.

Of Larks & Sparrows

By: Murray Bodo,

From: “Francis The Journey and the Dream”

To be in love with Jesus was to be in love with all creatures as well, for Jesus had made all creatures holy. When Jesus stepped into the Jordan, all water became sacred. For Francis everything that Jesus touched was forever spiritualized. If Jesus died on a cross, then all wood and every tree inspired with awe. If Jesus looked at the fields and birds and blessed them with His eyes, then every field and every bird was sister and brother to Francis because Jesus was his brother and Jesus was his friend and Lord, who shared everything He had with Francis. The sun was his brother, the moon was his sister and both belonged to him. In fact, everything Francis saw or heard or felt or smelled or breathed was his, because nothing was his. He had fiercely rooted out of his heart all possessiveness and greed; and as Jesus had promised, all these things were given back to him, pressed down and overflowing with love

Because he possessed nothing, he was possessed by all the free creatures of God. All of creation loved him, every bird and animal, and Francis knew it and loved them in return.

Francis loved most tenderly the larks of Umbria. In comparison to them as they soared high in the blue skies of spring, was the merest sparrow of a man. Sparrow! How fitting a name for himself. A poor ragged little sparrow. That was Francis. Feathers ruffled and frayed at the ends, brown and plain, perching on the balconies of Assisi, chirping his love songs to the poor and meek, the outcasts and beggars who do not need a lark to make them happy. Even he, poor sparrow of faded brown, could cheer the meek who seldom raised their eyes high enough to see a lark magnificent in its soaring and swooping in the clear skies of freedom.

But Francis loved the larks and wanted by his singing to make larks of all people, to lift them up and free their spirits so they could fly with him and all the larks above. In the blue freedom of God’s love, even a sparrow became a lark and fantasy and joy make everyone’s dream come true. Yet it was more than fancy. It was the promises of Jesus fulfilled here and now for those would dare to believe.

To those who felt all things, Jesus had promised eternal life and a hundredfold besides - now! Being a lark was part of the hundredfold; and on a spring morning, lifting his eyes from the red poppies and yellow buttercups of the Umbrian valley to Mount Subasio in the east, Francis wondered if being a lark might not be the whole of it. What greater beauty and grace could there be? For surely a lark was the resurrected Christ on wings of celebration.



NEWTON THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

By: Fr Leonard Jinga

On the Friday 5th June 2015 was the World Environment Day. Many schools and colleges throughout Papua New Guinea had activities of celebrating this great day with lots of different things to do.

However Newton College celebrated this day in a small way by beginning the day with an early morning Mass at about 7 am in the chapel of St Athanasius, the Mass presided by the Principal Fr Peter Moi. At the service the presider emphasised the importance of the World Environment Day by reminding those present in the worship about The Five Marks Of Mission Of The Worldwide Anglican Communion and one of this is

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

This led on to the blessing and prayer said by the presider for the seedlings that was to be planted later during the day. The planting of the seedlings was a sign of continual renewal of the life on earth, a replacing of what is taken out of our forest.

This reminds us as Christians that we are all part of the creation and to understand that our lives relate with the creation of this world.

A poem titled “The Mother Earth” written by Janet Faith Jinga express what the earth is for us

*Awesome and unique planet you are.
Like a mother that provides and breast feeds
Everything begins on you.
You are like a mother
At times you cry, you shiver, you feel the pain,
you express your feelings.
But why?
The life that begins on you
Does not understand you constantly.
The effects that you feel when you are abused.
When there is deforestation on you.
But still, your love is like a growing planet.
When you regain your health.
You provide, you care, and you shelter,
You are like a mother who still loves her children.*



*Primary growth forest.
Can we protect our forests?*



Students and children holding the seedlings to be planted.

Fr Peter blessing the seedlings



The Stigmata of St Francis

From the Legenda Minor of St. Bonaventure
(de Stigmatibus sacris, 1-4; ed. Quaracchi, 1941; pgg. 202-204)



Two years before Francis, the faithful servant of Christ, gave his soul back to God, he was alone on the top of Mt. Alverna. There he had begun a fast of forty days in honor of the archangel Michael and was immersed more deeply than usual in the delights of heavenly contemplation. His soul became aglow with the ardor of fervent longing for heaven as he experienced within himself the operations of grace.

As he was drawn aloft through ardent longing for God one morning near the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, and was praying on the mountainside, he saw what appeared as a seraph with six bright wings gleaming like a fire descending from the heights of heaven. As this figure approached in swift flight and came near the man of God it appeared not only winged but also crucified. The sight of it amazed Francis and his soul experienced joy mingled with pain. He was delighted with the sight of Christ appearing to him so graciously and intimately and yet the awe-inspiring vision of Christ nailed to the cross aroused in his soul a joy of compassionate love.



South Sudanese refugee child in Ethiopia
Photo Credit: Us/Leah Gordon

Refugees

Us (formerly USPG) is sending emergency funds to support the Anglican Church in Ethiopia as it reaches out to refugees fleeing war in South Sudan.

A civil war between political factions in South Sudan saw 350,000 refugees fleeing the country for the Gambella and Asosa regions of Ethiopia during 2014.

Now fighting is intensifying and a further 150,000 refugees are arriving in Ethiopia, putting immense pressure on relief efforts.

Most of the refugees arrive with only what they can carry, usually their children and a few clothes.

The needs are enormous. But, with support from the Us, the Anglican Church is doing what it can to provide food aid. In addition, churches in refugee camps are providing education and serving as community centres.

Report from the Rt Rev Dr Grant LeMarquand, Area Bishop [for the Horn of Africa]

‘A new refugee camp has opened a few kilometres from Gambella town. Another is being established near the town of Matar, and another in the Asosa region near the permanent camp Sherkole (the new camp has been given the poignant name ‘Sorry’).

‘The churches, however, are usually the first stop for the refugees. They often ask for food and shelter.

‘As well as food aid, there are churches in the refugee camps providing literacy classes and other educational support. In this way, the churches function as community centres for many refugees.

‘We have 15 mission centres in Gambella, each of which is a cluster of churches. Some of the churches are in established refugee camps; some are in villages and towns. We have 16 clergy and 90 lay readers in the area, so we are obtaining first-hand information about what is happening.

‘The church has planned food distribution in the Akobo-Tiergol region (accessible only by boat) and in Matar, benefiting 500 families in total.

‘And new church buildings will benefit a further 4,000 refugees. Two new churches are planned for the Jewi and Sorry refugee camps, and repairs will be made to a church in Dima camp, which was badly damaged by termites.

‘In addition, we are also seeking support from other Anglican agencies so hopefully we will have enough to cover immediate needs for the next couple of months.’

From:
“The Book of Common Prayer”
On: Prayer For The World
O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts, break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen

Third Order Franciscan Conference & General Chapter
at Canberra Grammar School, Red Hill ACT
Thursday 1st October - Sunday 4th October 2015
Enquiries to John Gibson tssf
Contact: 045168111,
email:johngibson@grapevine.com.au
May we uphold in prayer all those attending Chapter, and wish them safe travel.



(from left to right) Greg Marsh, Jonathon Coates, Tim Coates, Estelle Leaver, Fr Mervyn Thomas, Hannah Crossman, Fr Michael Chiplin and Bishop Godfrey Fryar

Pentecost Sunday 24th May, 2015
St Andrew's Anglican Church,
Indooroopilly. Qld.
Bishop Godfrey Fryar - Guest Speaker
Sermon - "Stewardship"
Excerpts from the Sermon

There is something special for gardeners and farmers about the first of the crop. It is the peak of productivity, and anything further that grows will not quite have the advantageous edge of the first.

Pentecost for Jews is one of the three original great festivals, along with Passover and Tabernacles. They all had their foundations in agriculture...Passover with barley harvest, Pentecost with wheat, and Tabernacles with grapes. Additional overlays of tradition were placed upon each festival, with the exodus from Egypt added to Passover and renamed accordingly, Pentecost with the giving of the Law at Sinai, and Tabernacles with the wanderings in the wilderness.

The agricultural background is important to bear in mind with Pentecost, upon which we as Christians have added yet a further layer above harvest and the giving of the Law, with celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit.

In the Hebrew agricultural community, the first of the crop was given to God. This even extended to first born sons, though they could be bought back by their anxious parents for a small fee. Thus Jesus was taken to the temple when he was 40 days old to be offered to God, and Mary and Joseph were able to bring him home, after purchasing and offering a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.

From offering the first of the crop or the first son grew the custom of offering 10% of what people had received, the tithe, a deep tradition in Judaism which has continued through Christian history to this day, as the minimum gold standard of giving.

In writing to the Christians in Rome, Paul uses the metaphor from the harvest ritual of Israel, where the first fruits are brought to the temple, in acknowledgement that the entire yield of the land is the gift of God, and that small portion that is given away consecrates the rest.

He then reminds them that they, in the midst of their struggles, already have the first fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is an interesting twist on the usual concept of first fruit.

Here in Paul's imagery, the whole direction of the divine human transaction is reversed. Instead of focusing on our giving to God, in this instance, he reflects on Pentecost and the Christian experience thereafter, that God has given the Spirit to believers as the first installment of the full harvest that will be theirs when finally the kingdom of God in its fullness breaks into history.

A key sign of that ongoing transformation will be seen in our capacity to forgive, and to love, and our willingness to sacrifice ourselves in our lives, in ways that echo back to the ancient harvest of wheat, where we give back to God, his people and to creation, the first fruits of what we receive, in a yeast of generosity that can consecrate the nine tenths that we are allowed to keep. In doing this our lives are changed.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Francis had a thirst for the search of meaning through ways of the Church, humanity and creation. A lifestyle of living simply, assisting the marginalized and his unconditional love for Jesus, his loving Creator, all contributed to the making of this humble, joyous and loving man.



His legacy lives on, even more today, in our complex world of greed, violence and poverty. This gentle man, Francis reminds us to care for all what God provides, supporting others in need, and making a small difference, to making this world a happier place.

Thank you to those who contributed to this Issue. I always enjoy hearing from you all and sharing your faith journey. The next issue is the Advent Issue. It is a time for quiet reflection, prayer and conversion in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ.

The deadline for The Advent Newsletter will be 15th November. One request to those who send in photos for inclusion, please ensure that the photos are jpgs and they have high resolution, as it makes it easier for me to work with. The requirements are 300-400 words on Word, unformatted. With thanks,

Blessings at Francistide.
 Pace e bene, Gloria

A four-fold Franciscan Blessing

- May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.
 - May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.
 - May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.
 - May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.
- Franciscans Day by Day - July 13.