



# The Province of Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THAILAND & SRI LANKA

## NEWSLETTER

### *Stigmata / Francistide Edition*

#### PROVINCIAL MINISTER'S LETTER STIGMATA 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Every September Franciscans are confronted with the bewildering mystery of the Stigmata of St Francis. To say the least, it is a very unusual celebration for some Anglicans, who are not generally into such things.

Celebrating the bravery of the martyrs with their profound Christian convictions even to death, is something that inspires us all as we recall the deaths of believers from St Stephen right through to the contemporary martyrs of the Middle East, parts of Africa and Pakistan, men, women and children who are dying for their faith every day.

The Stigmata of Francis is something else again. No enemy inflicts these wounds upon him, rather he sees them as a gift from God.

It is a great mistake to isolate our love of Francis solely as a response to his love for creation. Of course he loved creation and God as the Creator, but at the heart of his life was the Cross.

From that day at San Damiano when he knew Jesus Christ had spoken to him from the great Byzantine Cross in that ruined Church, and his subsequent embrace of Lady Poverty, identifying with the poorest and most marginalised, his life was marked by sacrificial living.

His inspiration was the Christ who had called him, the Christ who emptied himself and was born of Mary and who followed through that loving self-emptying vocation from God 'to the end' as St John's Gospel describes it, even to 'death on the cross' in the words of St Paul.

Francis of course went further than being inspired by the self-emptying Son of God. He wanted to completely identify with Jesus heroic vocation by, if it was God's will, bearing in his body the painful wounds his Lord had endured.

What I find most inspiring about Francis is not only that he received the wounds and accepted them as the most sublime gift of his Saviour's pain to be born with joy, but also that in the time that followed until his death, he did his best to hide the wounds from prying eyes.

Where does this leave us as we look at the marks of the Crucified on the body of Francis?

In the years leading up to the Stigmata, Francis was increasingly unwell, and some of this was undoubtedly due to the harsh way he treated his body. There was also the fact that medical science was fairly primitive, and treatments we take for granted were simply not available. Because of this Francis was no stranger to pain, but instead of railing against God, he began to see pain as something to be embraced and offered back to God. He longed to know the truth about the union of joy and triumph with sorrow and loss that he saw in Jesus.

In the Stigmata he experienced this and kept it carefully. To understand this we must look at his whole life of joy, gladness, poverty and service. All of this grew out of his deep love for the crucified Lord.

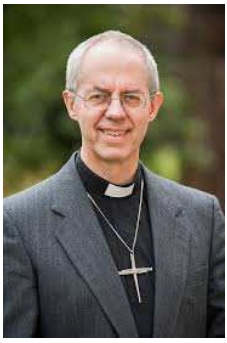
The Japanese poet Kenji Miyazawa left us powerful image for dealing with pain when he said "We must embrace pain, and burn it as fuel for our journey". This is what Francis learnt to do.

Pain and joy unite when life and Eucharist are brought together and we are gathered around Christ, and while God doesn't always give us answers, he always gives us himself.

Just as for Francis his 'ever deepening devotion to the indwelling Christ' was his 'source of strength and joy', for him leading even to the gift of the Stigmata, so for us, in further words of the Principles, 'It is Christ's love that inspires us to service and strengthens us for sacrifice'.

Pace e bene,





# **Archbishop Welby welcomes refugee community sponsorship scheme**

Posted on: July 19, 2016

(ACNS) The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has welcomed a new UK-government scheme to allow community groups in the country to directly sponsor a refugee family. Archbishop Welby said the scheme would allow churches and other civil society groups “to provide sanctuary to those fleeing war-torn places.”

The Full Community Sponsorship scheme was launched today by the UK’s senior home affairs minister, Home Secretary Amber Rudd, and Archbishop Justin Welby at Lambeth Palace. The scheme will enable charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to take on the role of supporting resettled refugees in the UK.

“The Full Community Sponsorship Scheme presents churches and other civil society groups with the opportunity to provide sanctuary to those fleeing war-torn places,” Archbishop Welby said. Refugees, like all people, are treasured human beings made in the image of God who deserve safety, freedom and the opportunity to flourish.

“It is an enormous privilege to welcome a family to live in a cottage in the grounds of Lambeth Palace. I am hugely grateful to the Home Office and Lambeth Council for their tireless work and support in enabling this to happen.”

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## **Provincial Ministers - 22-6-16**

### **ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS OF REGIONAL MINISTERS**

By: The Rt Revd Godfrey Fryar

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The three year cycle of the election of Regional Ministers has just been completed. Some RM’s have been nominated and are going on to a second term while in other regions new RM’s are taking up this ministry within the Franciscan community. We are most thankful for the ministries of some current RMS who have completed terms or have not sought reelection.

Regional Ministers in Australia have begun their term from August the 1st.

**QLD A - Graham Miller**

**QLD B/N.NSW - Ray Clifton**

**NSW A - Jill Gumbley**

**NSW B/ACT - Mandy Wheatley**

**VIC/TAS - Colin Valentine**

**SA - Roselind Ruwoldt**

**WA - Sandie Oakes**

**Please pray for these brothers and sisters for the  
responsibility of leadership within tssf.**

## **St Bonaventure And The art Of Memory**

Extracts from article, CORD p 20-21

Summer Edition by M Bellogole OSFS

By: Rev John Clarkson

Medieval art of memory is essential to the understanding of the thought of St. Bonaventure. He was recognized as a student with a keen memory and unusual intelligence. University students in Bonaventure’s time were required to have knowledge of Christian Classics. He memorized great portions of the OT and NT. He learned the essentials of composition and style also literary form such as narrative, argumentation and works of Praise. This included training in memorization since boyhood.

Today with electronics and printed information, the art of memory no longer exists – such as the philosopher Seneca could repeat two thousand names in the order they had been given or a teacher of rhetoric who could recite Virgil backwards.

Every school boy’s education included four basic techniques – visualization, order and sequence, construction of a memory place and repetition. For instance in memory of the Seven Capital Sins imagine a living room and in the centre a statue of oneself surrounded by lions and outside you see trees growing dollar bills. Then the TV shows image is of bikini clad women. This is so fixed in one’s mind that such ideas associated with the Capital Sins of Pride, Greed and Lust are emphasized.

In the memorization of a book it is logical that thoughts be placed in sequence. Also there is a memory place – perhaps a church building or a public place. Items to be remembered are placed in “the memory place” and retrieval. It is essential that the student continually visits his ‘memory place’ and go over the various items stored there, so that they remain fresh in his mind.

The nearest I got was being given a Prayer Book Collect to learn each week, but I think we all need to remember prayerful words from Scripture. I can recite each day the scripture sentence at the beginning of daily Morning Prayer in our Prayer Book, obviously we all know the Lord’s Prayer by heart; my favourite is, Jesus Lord I adore you, make me love you more and more or This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. I think too it is important to light a candle in church to remind us that Jesus is light.

Bonaventure was a visual thinker. When he wrote or preached he always looked at something – a picture, a candle or he looked out of the window to the garden or hills in the distance. In studying a subject he paints a picture of it in his mind and all the elements come out of it as he gazes upon it. In other words “the visual provides stepping stones to union with God”. The visual fills us with the light of God’s grace and His Glory.

**Blessed be the Lord forever and let all the people say,  
let it be, let it be. Amen. Ps 105, 148)**

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*The light of God surrounds us; The love of God  
enfolds us; The power of God protects us; The  
presence of God watches over us; Wherever we are,  
God is!*

By: James Dillet Freeman



## Honouring Our Elders: The Reverend Denis Woodbridge



**By: Sandra Jackson**

Francis is quoted as saying: 'A Religious is only as good a preacher as his actions show', as if to say, "A good tree is known only by its fruit." It is because of the fruits of his life that our much-loved brother, Denis Woodbridge, is held in such esteem within our Order and especially here in our Melbourne fellowship. I first came to know Denis at the end of the 1980s when we returned to Australia from NZ where I had been professed in 1988. Denis had already been professed since 1972 and was first elected to Chapter in 1977, so for me he quickly became a mentor and guide on my pilgrim journey. I admired his dedication and willingness to serve in leadership roles, while valuing his quiet wisdom, kindness and encouragement. A need for an overtly Christian group in which he might find a different sense of community was one of the things that drew Denis to the Franciscan Third Order and he did so much to nurture that sense of community, especially in his years as our Regional Minister here, 1992-1998, and as Provincial Chaplain, 1998-2003. Denis was one of the impressive group of early tertiaries that gathered at Bob Butterss' church in the 1970s, so much influenced by their formative years serving in PNG. Sharing what he had learnt from that experience of PNG was invaluable when Denis served as Provincial Chaplain and assumed responsibility for Regions in Formation. We have always benefitted too from Denis's scholarship – not something he 'possessed', but shared so readily with us, in many homilies at our TO Eucharists, and also in his history of our Order in this Province 1959-2009: Franciscan Gold.

**By: Colin Valentine**

I first met Denis in 2004 after I had made contact with the Victorian/ Tasmanian tertiaries and became an enquirer. When I was noviced, Denis was appointed my novice counsellor. As I reflect on the two years of my novicing it was a privilege to have Denis journey with me as my 'companion' as I further explored what it meant to follow our Lord in the company of Francis and Clare. In looking back there were three main highlights of my time with Denis:

1. Being able to learn from his gentle wisdom. We would usually meet in Denis's home after I had finished work and those times were very special as we shared together surrounded by his many books.
2. We had great thought provoking conversations that challenged me to reflect more deeply on being formed as a Franciscan as I worked through the Formation notes. But Denis didn't impose his wisdom on you but invited you to think about Franciscan life in a different way.
3. He was a kind, warm and welcoming role model and I appreciated very much his willingness to share with me his own ongoing formation.

My appreciation of Denis has continued over the years that I have known him and I know too that others have also valued that kind, wise, welcoming, quiet elder who has been with us on our Franciscan journey.

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## Assist Syrian Refugees

CWS (Christian World Service) has always depended on the generous support of churches that have welcomed refugees to the United States, both with their words and actions. Now, more than ever, there is a need for communities of faith to join together in exhibiting a radical and unwavering hospitality to refugees in need. These resources are dedicated to helping our partners, colleagues, and supporters educate and mobilize their congregations to this end.

*'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.'*

– Hebrews 13:2 (NRSV)

Contact: [bcasey@cwsglobal.org](mailto:bcasey@cwsglobal.org)

## Road Signs - Hope

Sent to me by: Anne Kotze

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

- Thomas Merton



## Clare, Bright Light

Excerpts from: "To Live as Francis Lived"

By: Foley, Weigel & Normile

To consider Franciscan life without reflecting on Clare of Assisi is like having a one-sided coin, a song without music, a rainbow without sunshine. Clare was young and in love with life when she witnessed Francis's fervor in following Christ.

What does Clare teach us about following Jesus? She teaches us to follow Francis, who followed Jesus so perfectly and so literally in pursuit of poverty. Clare teaches us that we can be committed faithful followers of Francis and of Jesus while doing it in our own unique way in accord with our circumstances in life. Clare journeyed the short distance from her father's home to the little Church of St Mary of the Angels, which Francis dubbed the Portiuncula or Little Portion. She was to spend the remainder of her life in the convent of San Damiano, the little chapel where the Lord had spoken to Francis from the crucifix saying, "Go and rebuild my Church."

### Taken from the testament of St Clare

With what eagerness and fervor of mind and body, therefore, must we keep the commandments of our God and Father, so that, with the help of the Lord, we may return to him an increase of his talent! For the Lord himself has placed us not only as a form for others in being an example and mirror, but even for our sisters whom the Lord has called to our way of life as well, that they in turn might be a mirror and example to those living in the world. Since the Lord has called us to such great things that those who are to be a mirror and example to others may be reflected in us, we are greatly bound to bless and praise God and be all the more strengthened to do good in the Lord. Therefore, if we live according to the form mentioned above, we shall leave others a noble example and gain, with very little effort, the prize of eternal happiness.

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*"She was the first flower in Francis's garden, and she shone like a radiant star, fragrant as a flower blossoming white and pure in springtime."*

- St Bonaventure



## The Stigmata of St Francis –

### The La Verna Experience

Excerpts from: "St Francis of Assisi",  
Writings for a Gospel Life

By: Regis J. Armstrong

While Thomas of Celano devotes much of his description of the La Verna experience to the reception of the stigmata, those marks resembling the sacred wounds of Christ, Bonaventure, the perception mystical

theologian, concentrates much of his attention on the manner of Francis's ascent to God. "There," Bonaventure writes in *The Soul's Journey into God*, "he passed over into God in ecstatic contemplation and became an example of perfect contemplation as he had previously been of action, like another Jacob and Israel, so that through him, more by example than by word, God might invite all truly spiritual men to this kind of passing over and spiritual ecstasy." Francis, however, tells us little. It is as if he were exemplifying the twenty-eighth admonition: "Blessed is that servant who stores up in heaven the good things which the Lord has revealed to him and does not desire to reveal them to others in the hope of profiting thereby, for the Most High Himself will manifest His deeds to whomever He wishes." More than likely, Bonaventure is far more perspective when he writes: "In this passing over, if it is to be perfect, all intellect activities must be left behind and the height of our affection must be totally transferred and transformed into God." Thus we should read with care the only writing that comes to us from La Verna, a small piece of parchment that Francis gave to Brother Leo.

He writes:

Two years before his death, in the place of LaVerna, blessed Francis kept a lent (a forty day retreat) in honor of the blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and of the blessed Michael the Archangel, from the feast of the Assumption until the September feast of St Michael. And the hand of the Lord was upon Him. After the vision and words of the seraph and the impression of the stigmata of Christ in his body, he composed those praises written in his own hand, while giving thanks to God for the kindness bestowed on him.

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*Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour; of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

Verse from "The Canticle of Brother Sun"



## Victoria/Tasmania Region Report

Profession of Graeme Frazer at All Saints Anglican Church,  
South Hobart



From left: Patti Singleton, Pam Heywood and Sue Chapman

Twelve tertiaries, family members, enquirers, and friends, met 30<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May to support Graeme on the joyous occasion of his Profession.

On Saturday we were welcomed with a delicious soup and “doorstep” salad sandwich lunch, when we renewed old, and formed new friendships.

Sandra and Gemma arranged a time slot to continue our Regions’ Novice notes discussion on Topic 2. We explored the life of St Clare and her gifts to the church as being relevant to our Christian lives. We enthusiastically shared Clare’s Christian devotion, compassion for the needy, strength of character and perseverance. She embraced utter poverty, total surrender of herself, so as to be more completely available as God’s little clay vessel. We were reminded of the story of her departure from her aristocratic family home, leaving via a door used for taking the deceased from the house, i.e. dying to herself and the world as she made for the Brothers at the Portuincula and her new life of obedience to God, firstly in protection at a Benedictine Abbey, then later in the little church and convent of San Damiano.

Following the discussion on St Clare, we attended the celebration of Graeme’s Profession within the Holy Eucharist at All saints. Graeme received his Professional cross from Sandra Jackson our Assistant Provincial Minister.

The regular church market was in full swing outside, which reminded me of the town of Assisi where the Holy Presence of God is so real in the midst of everyday happenings.

Gemma, with the Sunday school children had made Saint Francis bird feeders featuring various laminated colored panels of St Francis and his love of God’s creatures. Thank you Gemma for your gift to us of some panels which will be a joy to pass on to others, presenting an opportunity to tell Francis’ story.

Still in “Assisi”!! we took the short walk down to Pam’s place, pure white roses nodding over her fence inviting us in to her generous hospitality.

We reconvened for dinner at night to relish Tasmania’s iconic fare.

On Sunday at 10.15 am, we celebrated solemn Mass and fellowship at All Saints culminated in a very special Third Order occasion.

Thank you so much to our Tasmanian hosts for your hospitality and for being Christ in the midst.

## Franciscan & Holy Days To Note

2016

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

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Taken from:

## Franciscans Day by Day October 3

*The larks are friends of daylight and shun the shadows of twilight. But on the eve that St Francis passed from this world to Christ, just as twilight was descending, the larks rose up to the roof of his cell and began circling it with clamor of wing beat and song. No one knew if they were singing with joy or sadness, for their voices were filled with joyful tears and sad joy, as if they were orphaned children weeping and singing their father into heaven. The city guards who were keeping watch there were filled with wonder and they summoned others to witness the sight.*

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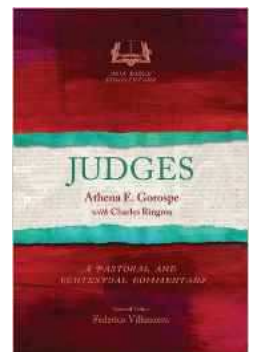
## “Judges”

By: Athena Gorospe & Charles Ringma

Amazon: Paperback \$24.00 and Kindle \$9.86

The book of Judges marks an important transition in the life of Israel. It shows the cycle of deviancy and repentance, heroic actions and social collapse, the misuse of power and the marginalization of God. This commentary seeks to help readers

navigate the many strange stories and characters of Judges by providing an overall framework for reading it and by explaining a way of entering its stories so that they can be appropriated in an Asian context. This commentary challenges the reader to pray and work for a spiritual revitalization, building a new social fabric in a world marked by injustice, pragmatism, and the loss of a God-centered way of life





## Feast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady, The Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary Celebrated on August 15

The Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15 each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition and in the Greek *kimisis*) or “falling-asleep” of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the Theotokos.

### BIBLICAL STORY

The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He saw His mother and His disciple John and said to the Virgin Mary, “Woman, behold your son!” and to John, “Behold your mother!” (John 19:25-27). From that hour, the Apostle took care of the Theotokos in his own home.

Along with the biblical reference in Acts 1:14 that confirms that the Virgin Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the tradition of the Church holds that she remained in the home of the Apostle John in Jerusalem, continuing a ministry in word and deed.

At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see the Theotokos. Except for the Apostle Thomas, all of them including the Apostle Paul were gathered together at her bedside. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ himself descended and carried her soul into heaven.

Following her repose, the body of the Theotokos was taken in procession and laid in a tomb near the Garden of Gethsemane. When the Apostle Thomas arrived three days after her repose and desired to see her body, the tomb was found to be empty. The bodily assumption of the Theotokos was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles.



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## Gifts of 2016 Retreat at James Byrne Centre, Toowoomba

By: Dawn Punter

**Trees:** The old age gums are like wise old men keeping watch over the gathering.

**Plants:** So many different shapes of leaves and shades of green.

**Flowers:** Tiny colored petals reminding us “they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet how pretty”.

**Breeze:** With pure mountain air wafting the trees, moving the branches, as the Holy Spirit pressures us.

**Birds:** Chattering to welcome each new day.

**Sun:** To make sure we were warmed.

**Chapel:** Its beautiful clear glass windows to reveal a display of nature at its best.

**Light of the candles:** To remind us that Clare was predicted to be a light in a dark world.

**Fellowship:** Of the members of the Third Order.

**Comfort:** Of our excellent accommodation.

**Food:** Of such top quality and the people who provided it.

**Br. Alfred:** Who portrayed to us the attributes that made Francis such a wonderful inspiration to the world for Peace, Justice, and the appreciation of creation.

**OUR PRAISE TO OUR GOD, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,  
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE INSPIRATION WE TAKE  
FROM THIS RETREAT INTO OUR DAILY LIVES.**

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## “Don’t Worry about Tomorrow”

Excerpt taken from:

“The Lessons of St. Francis – How to bring Simplicity and Spirituality in to your Daily Life”

By: John Michael Talbot with Steve Rabey

James the brother of Jesus was critical of the arrogance of those who tried to control their lives through detailed, far-reaching plans: “You don’t even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Likewise, in small ways and big ways, Francis sought not to be distracted from the responsibilities of today by worries about tomorrow. When he sent his friars out to collect alms, he instructed them only to collect enough for one day. And he forbade the monastery’s friar cooks from soaking vegetables the night before they were to be cooked.

The Jesuit writer Jean Pierre DeCoussaid describes this kind of attention to the here and now as “the sacrament of the present moment.” This doesn’t mean one can’t have plans or hopes for tomorrow. But it does mean that too many of us are preoccupied about the future – or too consumed by the past – to concentrate on the beauty and the promise of the current.

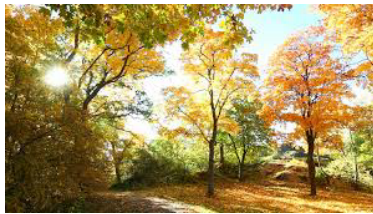
Embrace the immediate moment. Practice being present when you’re washing the dishes, cutting the grass, relaxing in the bath tub, or taking out the trash. Learn how to be alive in the here and now instead of constantly dreaming and scheming for something better.

*True joy is the earnest wish we have of heaven, it is a treasure of the soul, and therefore should be laid in a safe place, and nothing in this world is safe to place it in.*

- John Donne

# Silence

By: Paul Hawker



Few years ago when I was a novice I attended our annual NSW tertiary Franciscan weekend silent retreat at St Joseph's Convent Kincumber NSW.

The convent is sited among lush green paddocks that gently dip down towards a tidal inlet. The bird life is prolific and goats quietly graze the meadows. The occasional small dinghy putt putts slowly past and the occupant more often than not kindly lifts an arm to wave an acknowledgment. It is a beautiful and tranquil setting, very peaceful.

Being a silent retreat, from Friday evening through to Sunday midday, the twenty of us didn't speak to each other. Although we met every few hours for group worship and to eat meals, conversation was absent.

Here are some thoughts on such shared silence.

- Silence like sorrow is a great leveler.

The learned cannot impart their wisdom so the less learned don't feel so dumb.

- In silence with others I don't have to 'keep up' with outer conversations so I can better pay attention to the inner ones.
- In silence I don't have to discuss, defend and debate, instead I can better hear the inner voice of love.
- Silence means those who are verbal and dominate conversations are now as equal as the shy.
- Silence peels off the masks I wear, leaves me more open and vulnerable, less judgmental, more accepting.
- Silence teaches me to wait - to pray rather than talk, to turn to The Father first rather than last.
- Silence shows that not all things can be solved or salved by others' words, for as reassuring and kind as they might be, they are no substitute for the Father's.
- Silence makes me look and listen, see and smell - to pay attention to what is going on around me, rather than thinking of what next to say, where next to be, what next to do.
- Silence imparts reverence and peacefulness. It is infectious - our tranquility reaches out and comforts in ways that words can not.
- Silence lets my child heart rise up within me, the part of me that is closest to the Father, the place where my longings cease and I find myself at peace.

At first silence catapults me into a cacophony of thoughts. A fireworks display of conversation rehearsals, sentence try outs and unformed distractive thinking. I pray for such thoughts to die, for if I fight them they will control me.

I pray for my heart to do the thinking, not my head.

Like holding onto the handrail of a roller coaster I hang in there through the hours and days of jostling, tumbling, jumbling thoughts. Eventually the thoughts exhaust themselves and as they die they provide nutriment for the spiritual roses in my heart to grow.

Finally, they blossom and I smell their fragrance, revel in their perfume.

I pay attention to the here and now, see and hear wonderful creation.

I feel the earth vibrate with life. I sense the infinite generosity that gifted supernovas and galaxies to spawn all this. I realise too that each time I am generous with my gifts I am partaking in the blessed mystery of this outrageous flagrant love that is the source of all.

Silence.

No wonder Jesus so often took himself off to be alone. To listen and be with his Father, for He is so very fond of us and loves our company so.

Truly this is heaven on earth.

Silence.

## Living Simply

Excerpts taken from: Franciscan Action Network

<https://franciscanaction.org/earthcorps/article/living-simpl>

1. All creatures bear the imprint of God- The radical reorientation that comes from seeing God in all of creation is fundamental to Franciscan simple living. When Jesus stated that "The kingdom of God is at hand" Francis saw God's kingdom as a tangible reality in the here and now, and not some abstract or otherworldly realm. In fact, this is evidenced by the affection he expressed toward animate and inanimate creatures in his Canticle of the Creatures. When we revere our environment, we consider every act of harm we do to the environment as an affront to God and every act of care towards the environment as a sharing in the love between God (the Creator) and us (the creatures).

2. A proper spirit of detachment from material possessions- Franciscan simple living is an experience of what happens when we reprioritize means and ends in our lives. When Jesus tells his disciples to forsake all the possessions that they have come to see as means to survival, he is not telling them to ascetically give up care for themselves as an end in itself. The Grace of God is the end that Jesus is asking them to seek instead. The message is that: the Grace of God may be received by means of miraculous healings or sustaining comforts.

3. Solidarity with the poor - In order to experience the life of the poor, Francis gave up his wealthy inheritance and sought the virtue of living at a level equal to the poor. A life of poverty need not be life of impoverishment, as Jesus reflects in his statement, "The laborer deserves his keep." Although God's grace is and has always been free, many believe that just material wealth distribution ought to be merit based. Living in Solidarity with the poor requires us to reexamine how our competition for material wealth has left our poor brothers and sisters impoverished. It seems necessary to mention that for Francis, the poor likely extended to animate AND inanimate creatures. Trees labor tirelessly to give us the oxygen we need to survive. Living a simple life is living a life of universal kinship.

4. Living in a house of peace - God gave Francis his own commission, "Go repair my house which as you see has fallen into ruin." Amid the rampant corruption of the medieval institutional Church, Francis saw the Church as a worthy house. To his credit at the time, Pope Innocent III was able to see that a small peasant from Assisi may have been the only person in Italy capable of preventing the house from collapsing. In 800 years, the 3 Franciscan Orders have never left the housing of the institutional Church.

5. Worthiness is not earned it is experienced, Francis once stated, "I have been all things unholy; if God can work through me, He can work through anyone." Simple living can indeed be quite simple, especially when we come to understand that God is the one doing good work through us. The worthy people that Jesus is referring to in the Gospel are none other than those humble few who have experienced their own self-worth. These are those who know what abundance they still have when all of their material possessions have been given away. It is what Jesus means when he instructs his disciples to give from their poverty and not from their wealth. (Mk 12:44) Franciscan simple living is above all else an exercise in gratefulness for the simple gifts we have received in life and the capacity to take part in the experience of giving to others.

## A Reflection on Discussions to a deeper Franciscan Journey Outcome from 2015 Convocation in New Zealand



If you would like some more information, she also has them for sale and all the proceeds go towards helping others.

**Rose's email:** [rosechristiefrench@gmail.com](mailto:rosechristiefrench@gmail.com)

### 2 Reflection/ study 2

Hi again, we hope you are enjoying the season of more inside time and finding a chance to ponder these thoughts. Please do remember to feedback any discussions and thoughts to help us all on our journeys'. There has been some quite significant and action provoking discussions and thoughts so far which is just awesome.

**Prayer, obedience and joy.**

#### A scripture

Mark 1: 35 - 39

What a Sabbath it had been! There was the teaching and healing in the synagogue, the homely healing in Simon's and Andrew's house...and after sunset, so many crowded round the door...

Next morning, early - no sleeping in but at prayer, checking it out with Abba, ready to obey. "No, Simon, ours is to be a ministry on the way, taking the healing and grace and love of God along the tracks, into the market places, along the lake-shore."

How do you respond to Clare and her ministry? To Francis and his?

Perhaps there is a Clare: Francis balance in Jesus' pattern?

What do you make of Paul's teaching to pray at all times? Would it be helpful to expand the word "pray"? How?

#### A story

Clare, who was made a Holy Sister by Francis himself, was sometimes visited by the Pope in her convent. He came all the way from Rome to Assisi just to see her and hear her wise teachings about spiritual things. One day when the Pope was there, Clare had the sisters prepare a simple meal. She asked the Pope to bless the bread but the Holy Father said that Clare should do it this time. She thought that the Pope should but in obedience to him she did what he asked. A wonderful thing happened then. As soon as Clare had blessed the bread the sign of the cross appeared on each loaf. Not only that, but they were very beautiful to look at. Some of the delicious loaves were eaten that night. As the Pope left he blessed Clare and the other sisters and he took with him some of her loaves, still with the sign of the cross on them. These loaves, by a miracle, were wonderfully preserved and they never grew stale or mouldy. In the convent at this time were Clare's own mother and her real sister as well as other virtuous sisters in Christ. Francis sent them many people who were sick and they healed all who came, by their prayers and the sign of the Cross.

#### A prayer

"Dear Lord, help me to be faithful to my calling, keep me in your presence and help me to do your will. Amen"

## Characteristics of Franciscan Brotherhood/ Sisterhood

Excerpts taken from: Franciscan spirituality, Unit four, Page 99

[sfo.franciscans.org.au/sfo30/four1franspirit.doc](http://sfo.franciscans.org.au/sfo30/four1franspirit.doc)

From the time of our Franciscan profession, we are not alone, but always live in communion with our brothers and sisters. Our profession to live according to the Gospel means that we live in a community of brothers/sisters. "It is within the community and because of the community that our vocation is brought to maturity; for **it is the community which is the privileged place of our encounter with God.** We share the same goal and help each other to reach it. We turn towards each other in mutual love according to the command and example of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, we look to each other with **mutual respect** and, with simplicity, make known our needs to each other in a spirit of service. Such an attitude would avoid any disputes, grumbling and anger or negative judgments of each other. The main characteristic is **love** not simply in words but in actions. In other words, we must be genuine, undiscriminating witnesses to the Gospel. Positively, we must seek to be peace-makers and reconciling one with the other both within and outside our communities.

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### "The Beatitudes"

#### From: Lettre Trimestrielle des intercesseurs No 151 p1

By: Sandra Beck

In a French prayer leaflet, I read the following which I translated in my schoolgirl French

Happy are the Poor of Heart (sic); the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

This beatitude, calling us to be like the poor, is the heart of our intercession. It invites us to place ourselves in an attitude of humility, of simplicity, of stripping of self, of faith in the Lord in order to adopt an attitude of compassion, of respect and of listening on behalf of those who are suffering and entrust us with their distress.

To adopt an intention of prayer, or to take an intention in your prayer, is also to be a sign of poverty. 'Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me'. The response of Jesus is at the height of this plea. 'Go, your sins I have forgiven'.

We intercessors place all the shackles (of sin) in the heart of Jesus and implore His mercy.

It is in the action of grace that we place ourselves each time that we receive or give. God transforms our poverty of spirit into the spirit of sonship and a source of oneness with others.

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An 87yr. old married tertiary living in Grafton, confined to the town and home area because of family health problems seeks to establish contact with other isolated tertiaries who feel that they might benefit and / or enjoy contact via email or in writing on a regular basis touching on aspects of our calling.

Pace - Alan Bentley e.mail [alan\\_bentley@bigpond.com](mailto:alan_bentley@bigpond.com)



## The Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia

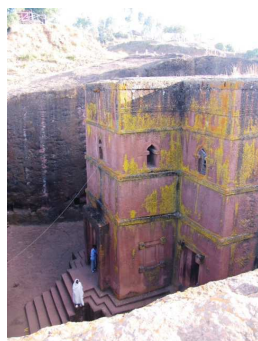
By: Nicki Jenkins

I have a special interest in Ethiopia, as our son was born in Addis Ababa. We have visited on a number of occasions, and one of my great joys when travelling through the nation is visiting some of the many monasteries. Ethiopia was one of the world's first Christian nations, with Christianity adopted as the state religion from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Aksumite Empire (400BC – 750AD) in Ethiopia had strong links to southern Arabia and the middle east, and many Ethiopians today fervently believe that the Ark of the Covenant was removed from the Temple in Jerusalem soon after the time of Solomon and relocated to Aksum (Axum) where it remains to this day. A story for another occasion!

Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity is practiced by approximately 50% of the population today, and the practice of religion as part of daily life is very visible.

One of my favourite places in Ethiopia is the town of Lalibela, which is situated in the mountainous northern regions. Lalibela, a town of about 13,000 people, is home to an amazing series of churches carved out of solid rock in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Traditionally held to be built by the hands of angels, the churches of Lalibela were created on the orders of King Lalibela who was instructed by God to create a new Jerusalem. Many of the 11 churches are free-standing and some are connected by hidden tunnels. All are located within a

300m x 300m area, and many are quite substantial reaching 2 or 3 storeys in height. These churches are truly one of the wonders of the world. Beautiful, mysterious and mystical, the churches and the priests, deacons and pilgrims who worship in them emit an aura of ancient holiness. Witnessing a traditional Ethiopian Orthodox service, lit by candles and heavy with the smell of incense, the language of the prayers was unfamiliar (the ancient Ge'ez) and the music which accompanied the worship strange to my ears, yet I distinctly felt that God was present, and marvelled at visiting and worshipping in such a place. Each church is simply yet beautifully decorated with carving, colourful icon-like paintings and intricately cast processional crosses (the very distinctive Ethiopian Christian art). Among the many more profound lessons I learnt visiting Ethiopia, it was in Lalibela that I first really understood about "sorting the sheep from the goats". Devoid of the centuries of breeding programs that have rendered sheep and goats in industrialised nations quite unlike visually, sheep and goats in Ethiopia look almost identical – a city girl from Brisbane could only tell the difference when it was pointed out the goats have tails which stick up and sheep have tails which hang down!



## My dearest brother Francis,

Anon

Though we may be worlds apart, your humble words still echo in my mind and heart – "Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words!"

How profoundly beautiful and essential...such a testimony to our Lord Jesus!

You worked so hard to bridge gaps between people of different faiths- I think that's why I wish to follow in your footsteps – EVERYONE is loved and important to God!

I miss you, dear Frank!

I miss your inspirational attitudes and ideas, your completely perfect and unwavering faith – I even resent it...a lot!

How can someone live such a faithful life?

How can God be seen in EVERYthing?

I want to see Him, Frank, I do! But something in me still crosses the street when I see a homeless person in despair. It feels hopeless. I feel hopeless.

I desperately love God, Frank, but sometimes the anger and frustration I feel for my life - this life, is only occasionally deafened by the croaking of amphibians rejoicing in God's grace. What should I do? Where should I go? Why can't I talk to God?

You suffered so much, faithful Frank...how did you do it ?! Your time in prison; your health; your dedication to rebuilding the church of San Damiano; the wounds of Christ ?! You were so young but the years took their toll on you, my dear Brother! Why wouldn't you rest? The Lady Poverty you spoke of - she is such cruel mistress! I ache to embrace her and the knowledge of her existence...oh, how I envy you, Frank!

I feel that you would weep at the state of the world today...still so little progress; so much hate and unending indigence.

How have things not changed in hundreds of years?

Where has LOVE gone?

I've read that you had many joining with you to follow in Jesus' footprints and that you spent time with a girl called Clare? What was she like? From the stories I've heard, I think that we would have been friends.

Oh sweet Frank! Never assuming dominance or superiority over anyone or anything – always looking for equality, everywhere! And it's in that that you inspire!

I need to wrap up this letter now, Francis – there's much to do and much love to spread, in God's name!

Thank you for listening,

Pax et Bonum ~ your loving Sister.

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*The peace which you proclaim with words must dwell even more abundantly in your hearts. Do not provoke others to anger or give scandal. Rather, let your gentleness draw them to peace, goodness and concord. This is our vocation: to heal wounds, to bind what is broken, to bring home those who are lost.*

- St Francis

## The Stigmata of St Francis

By: Alan Bentley

When it was mooted that I should offer some thoughts for this edition of the newsletter I realised how little I knew of the stigmata. I had the basics of Our Lord's suffering and I remembered a Therese Neumann a German Stigmatic from the thirties who got lost to me with the hostilities of the forties.

Google opened up the history of the stigmata entitling it "Dishonourable Remarks". I cannot see the Our Lord's stigmata were in any way dishonourable considering His reason for submitting to it. Paul gets an early mention as possible stigmata via his letter to the Galatians 6:17 however this may be open to interpretation as the Marks of Our Lord mentioned in Galatians could have been the result of numerous floggings suffered by Paul as highlighted in Acts.

Francis is generally recognised as the first to receive the stigmata followed over the centuries by about eight hundred old accepted stigmatic's 80% of whom were women and almost all were lay people with ordained people only receiving it in very recent times. Several tertiaries are highlighted on the list. The Church of Rome has run a very strict screening process for those presenting with signs of the stigmata. These signs range from suppurating sores to just faint marks on the appropriate part of the body. They do not deteriorate or become infected and considered to be a gift of grace from Our Lord to a very special servant whose mind and soul devotes itself to His precious Passion.

Humans over history seek to be recognised as a special people and some of us have gone the wrong way about gaining respect and status, even to enjoying control over those around us to our detriment. I feel that all this seeking is such a waste of time and energy as Our Lord freely gives us love and the grace to be secure and happy relying on His great strength in the simpleness of life.

My heart goes out to those who present with spurious claims of the stigmata. Why would a person seek to damage themselves and bring themselves into disrepute within their church community, while seeking recognition as a special person, seeking the love of others, seeking the love of God?

\* \* \* \* \*

*But ask the animals, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;  
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
Who among all these does not know  
that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
In his hand is the life of every living thing  
and the breath of every human being.  
- Job 12: 7 - 10*



## Policy Making Bush Pig Stories

By: Mac Campbell

My short policy story vids were made for Oscar Metcalfe who asked me for some help; he's a thirty-five year old engineer off to Canberra to study policy-making.

Now I've sent 'em also to friends and old colleagues, and got some feedback, it's time to sort 'em out, edit 'em, and try for a younger audience. No-one's ever going to read much of what I've written, but I'm enthusiastic about using stories.

Almost all my old mates are philosophers, and their feedback is very +.

I called my policy making vids "Bush Pig" stories because I have no qualifications whatever.

In fact almost every policy recommendation I ever made has been silenced by gatekeepers. You know who you are, at least a dozen of you sad sacks. Hierarchy sucks. Happily alternatives are transforming hierarchies everywhere, because line management is hopeless at handling rapid change. (This is to whet your appetite for vids I haven't made yet.)

Feedback is helpful.

I've learned that the point of the "Cyclone over Townsville" story, for example, needs clarification; (people managing complex projects often end up back where they started, failed. As did the Census people in Australia recently.)

I want to teach that failure is normal. **What's not normal is to come off unscathed.**

My core policy idea is: A **"Treat moral schemes like the plague"**. In this I follow my old mentor, (Ian Hinckfuss) who despised morality because it inevitably divides us into three classes: moral experts, conformists, and deviants. I'm therefore not the slightest bit interested in the application of rules; rather I want to see **Engagement, Negotiation, and Accommodation.**

Anyone who "gets" these **big three**, "gets" the genius of British common law, and also "gets" the core of Confucianism. That's how I want my stories to make policy-making understandable; useful tools even for people caught in giddy whirlpools of moral obligation.

I propose also at some stage to produce a series on theological implications of the Jewish civil war of the inter-testamental period.

And a series **"Capitalism for Children"**, on the nature of property.

Meanwhile I've rearranged my vids, so if you want to access them use this permanent link to my Youtube homepage and scroll down to "created playlists":

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXHoNeLnp0aY0TkYZmHeUVg>

**This is an excerpt from the book, *Mystics for Every Millennium – Heart of Life 2000*.  
(edited by Brian Gallagher MSC)**

“...Francis was a poet, a dreamer and a young man who has the world at his feet, and who in that moment of grace and enlightenment, has his world turned upside down. Everything that he valued and striven for became worthless and unwanted, and all he had shunned and abhorred became the choice of Jesus, the poor man of Nazareth who was, at the same time, the true Son of a prodigiously lavish God ... and Francis wanted nothing but to make the same choice.

“.... This lovely allegorical poem that Francis’ biographers put on his lips, is the key to our understanding of where the hearts of Clare and Francis met in an exchange of wonder and commitment. In the poem it is Lady Poverty who speaks to paraphrase from the book of Wisdom.

“I was once in the Paradise of God, where people walked naked. In fact, I walked in them and with them in their nakedness throughout that most splendid Paradise, fearing nothing, doubting nothing, and suspecting no evil.

I thought I would be with them forever, for the Most High created them just, good and wise and placed them in the most pleasant and beautiful place.

I rejoiced exceedingly and played before them all the while for possessing nothing they belonged entirely to God.

But then evil entered the garden and people fell from innocence and I, Lady Poverty, became a fugitive upon the earth.

From then on I did not find a resting place for my feet.

While Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants received promises of riches and a land flowing with milk and honey,

I sought rest in them, but did not find it until, at last, the Son of the Most High came into the world from the bosom of the Father, and he who is all graciousness, sought me out and took me to Himself.

“So Francis perceives that it is Jesus who first espouses Lady Poverty and for that reason he seeks her constantly to give her rest in the purity of his own heart. The poem continues with Francis now speaking to Lady Poverty:

“Thus it was that the Son of the Most High became enamoured of your beauty.

While he was in the world, he clung to you alone and proved that you were utterly faithful in everything.

And you, a most faithful spouse, a most tender lover, did not abandon him but clung to him even more faithfully the more you saw him despised by others.

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***The Way of Love***

***“I hold three treasures***

***Close to my heart.***

***The first is love;***

***The next, simplicity;***

***The third, overcoming ego.”***

***(TAO 67)***

**Vale Valerie Butler**

**16 August 1937 – 29 June 2016**

By: Colin Valentine



On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016 some of Val’s Franciscan friends attended her funeral, which was held at St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balnarring. It was an honour and a privilege for me to be invited by Val’s family to deliver the eulogy. Val had begun preparing her life story about a month before she died and it was finished by her family. Below are some of the extracts that are pertinent to Val’s Franciscan walk.

*Throughout their married life, Val and Keith attended a number of churches, including Blackburn Methodist, Balwyn Baptist, Somerville and Balnarring Anglican Churches. Many close friendships were formed through these faith communities. In 1997 Val became a professed member of the Third Order of the Society of Francis and journeyed with them until her life’s end. Alongside Jill Manton and Tess Veenker, Val trained Spiritual Companions at WellSpring (an ecumenical Spirituality Centre in Ashburton, Melbourne). Val had the privilege of still seeing people for Spiritual Companions at Baxter (where she and Keith were living) until May 2016, when she judged she was too ill to “listen well”.*

*Val’s struggle with oesophageal cancer was characterised by courageous and compassionate concern for others, even through the rigours of treatment and failing health. No matter how weak or ill she felt, she strove to remain alert to the experiences of those whose paths she crossed. She practised daily prayer and meditation and maintained a strong commitment to her Franciscan rule. Her creative and playful approach to life was a gift to those who knew her..... On Wednesday 29 June, Val peacefully and joyfully went to be with her Lord, surrounded by family and free from pain, thanks to the wonderful staff at the Peninsula Palliative Care Unit.*

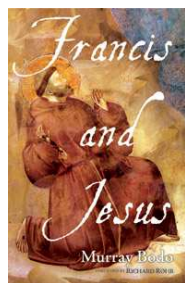
*In finishing her story, Val described herself as “a very ordinary person given a wonderful husband, family and friends and blessed by God throughout her life”. Those who knew her, however, would say that through her many ‘ordinary’ acts, she showed herself to be a truly extraordinary person.*

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## **The Principles (for daily reading) Day Three – The Object**

Jesus calls those who would serve him to follow his example and choose for themselves the same path of renunciation and sacrifice. To those who hear and obey, he promises union with God. The object of the Society of Saint Francis is to build a community of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Master, and are dedicated to him in body and spirit. They surrender their lives to him and to the service of his people. The Third Order of the Society consists of those who, while following the ordinary professions of life, feel called to dedicate their lives under a definite discipline and vows. They may be female or male, married or single, ordained or lay.





## Gospel Poverty

Excerpts taken from: "Francis and Jesus",

Introduction Pages xx -x xi

In overcoming himself and embracing the leper, Francis found true gospel poverty; he found a poverty that was a new kind of riches. Now he had only to rid himself of whatever else was keeping him from this hidden treasure he had found. He discovered what that was in the small chapel of St Mary of the Angels, hidden among the woods and marshes of the plain where the lepers lived.

It was February 24, 1208, and Francis was attending Mass; at the reading of the Gospel. He heard the Gospel passage that changed his life. It not only completed his vision of poverty, but it also gave him the lifestyle he was to embrace. And this is how it was, as his first biographer, Thomas of Celano, narrates it:

But when on a certain day the Gospel was read in that church, how the Lord sent His disciples out to preach, the holy man of God, assisting there, understood somewhat the words of the Gospel, and after the Mass he humbly asked the priest to explain the Gospel to him more fully. When the priest had set forth in order all these things, the holy Francis, hearing that Christ's disciples should not possess gold or silver or money; nor carry along the way scrip, or wallet, or bread, or a staff; that they should not have shoes, or two tunics; but that should preach the kingdom of God and penance, he immediately cried out exultingly: **"This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart."**

In the words of the medieval Franciscan Poet  
Jacopone da Todi, is this:

***Poverty is to have nothing; And to desire nothing  
And to possess everything; In a spirit of freedom.***

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## Dear Sisters and Brothers

Francis was a passionate disciple of Jesus in matters concerning creation, humanity and the Church.

He found joy in the simple things of life, a love for creation and cherished his times of solitude with the Lord.

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. The requirements are 300-400 words on Word, unformatted.

For those who wish to write to me, my address is: 26 Fairley St.,

Indooroopilly, 4068, Qld.

Email: [gloria@radiantpathways.com.au](mailto:gloria@radiantpathways.com.au)

Contacts: 07 33710265 and 0412400374

Pace e bene,  
Gloria



**New General  
Leadership Team  
27 July, 2016  
Sr Pauline Robinson**

MISSIONARY FRANCISCAN SISTERS, KEDRON, QLD.

[www.mficaust.org.au/news-and-events/fx-articles.cfm?loadref=16on](http://www.mficaust.org.au/news-and-events/fx-articles.cfm?loadref=16on)

The General Chapter meeting at Drumalis Retreat Centre in Larne, N. Ireland has set the future direction of the Sisters for the next five years and elected a new and diverse General Leadership Team. Sr Pauline Robinson from Australia was elected to the role of General Minister. The role of Vicarress, or Assistant Leader, was taken up by Sr Marie Puleo who comes from the United States Circle. The two Councillors are Sr Danielle Julien who belongs to the Canadian Circle, and Sr Rosella Lasi who comes from the Papua New Guinea Circle. Sr Danielle was on the previous General Leadership Team. It is the first time and Papuan New Guinea sister has been elected to leadership at the Generalate level in our Institute, so it was a historic moment for the delegates gathered at Chapter. All of the Sisters elected to the team bring experience in Leadership, an understanding of the diverse needs of the Institute which is spread across eleven countries, and a desire to move into the future with hope.

The theme of the Chapter was "I am the Vine...Prune for fruitfulness". The Chapter members took time to thanks the out going team for their contribution to the life of the Institute over the past five years. Sr Jeanette Guadet, Sr Terentia Hynes, and Sr Veronica Weygand will take time for sabbatical before returning to their home Circles.

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## Practice The Jesus Prayer

[www.spiritualleadership.com/γ](http://www.spiritualleadership.com/γ)

Old & New Testaments – The Jesus Prayer finds its roots in the reverent awe reserved for the name of the true and living God in the Judeo-Christian tradition. One manifestation of this awe in Jewish history was the refusal to say aloud the most sacred of all names for God—YHWH. The Old Testament veneration for God's name was transferred by early Jewish Christians to the name of Jesus. The power of the Jesus Prayer lies in the authority of the name, person, and character of Jesus over the power and reign of evil. Elements of this prayer are found in the New Testament: (a) blind Bartimaeus's cry to Jesus, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mk. 10:47, Lk. 18:38); (b) two blind beggars shouting "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Mt. 20:30); and (c) the publican's plea, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." (Lk. 18:13) Church history – The Jesus Prayer comes down to us through the Eastern Orthodox tradition as a way to practice the unceasing prayer that Paul commends (1 Thess. 5:17). The prayer has usually been said rhythmically with silent pauses in between each repetition. Some form of this prayer was probably said in the Egyptian Desert in the fourth century and the first record we have with the invocation of the name of Jesus was St. Nilus (d. c. 430) and St. Diadochus (d. before 486). The standard (long) form of the prayer above is first found in The Life of Abba Philemon in Egypt sometime between the 6th and 8th centuries and also in some Coptic sources in this period. It was used extensively in the 14th century in the monastic community at Mount Athos in Greece. It is sometimes referred to as hesychast prayer or the prayer of the heart that descends from the mind into the heart.