



The Province of Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SINGAPORE & SRI LANKA

NEWSLETTER

A d v e n t



E d i t i o n

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Advent Gospels contain warnings about being ready for the Second Coming of Christ, and, in the fierce words of John the Baptist, focusing on the Kingdom of God.

Our blockages are mostly to do with prioritising possessions more than the values of the Kingdom.

Francis saw the harm that possessions could do to people, and after having lived with everything that money could buy, he shed the lot, and when others came along to follow Jesus with him, he absolutely forbade them from owning anything or even touching money!

The Principles of the Third Order have much to say about possessions.

- *Although we possess property and earn money to support ourselves and our families, we show ourselves as true followers of Christ and St Francis by our readiness to live simply and share with others.*
- *We avoid luxury and waste and regard our possessions as being held in trust for God.*
- *We aim to stay free from all attachment to wealth keeping ourselves constantly aware of the poverty in the world and its claim on us.*



Bishop Rowan Williams tells a story about two Welshmen sitting in a pub discussing the recent death of one of their neighbours.

‘How much did he leave?’ asked one of them.

The other lifted an eyebrow and replied, ‘Everything!’

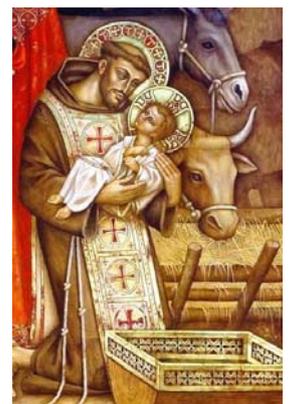
In his sermon in Westminster Abbey for the recent Oscar Romero centenary, Rowan Williams went on to say: ‘Those who are wealthy in the world’s terms are given the privilege of using the things of the world for the flourishing of their neighbour. Beggars together, we become rich together.

What is given is given to be given.’

As Franciscans who, unlike the Brothers and Sisters of the First and Second Orders, share in ‘wealth’, we are above all called to be givers, generous givers for the mission of the church and the needs of the world.

Peace and all goodness,

+Godfrey tssf



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

Third Order Provincial Conference 2018

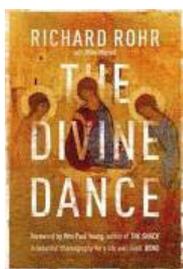
Greetings, dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is just over 6 months (14-17 June, 2018) until our next Provincial Conference and General Chapter. The QldB/NNSW Region is excited to welcome you to this special gathering of tertiaries.

The theme of our Conference is “Imagining a new world”.

In preparation for the Conference, I encourage you:

- As you read the Principles day by day in the Community Obedience consider the world that they envisage. How different is the Franciscan vision from the world we live in?
- Read /study Richard Rohr’s book, ‘The Divine Dance’, individually or in your Area Fellowship. If the character of God is relationship and communion what does that mean for us individually and corporately?



As tertiaries living in the contemplative Franciscan spirit our Principles have much to reflect upon. In imagining such a world we can have a voice in such matters as creation/the environment and social justice.

This Conference is an opportunity for each of us to explore what Franciscan spirituality looks like in this century, and what impact it can have upon the world of today - in our locality.

It is just a little more than 6 months until we meet.

Have you registered yet?

Already a significant number of tertiaries have registered for the Conference. I encourage you to register now to confirm your place. Please find the Registration (and Information) form attached.

I encourage you to complete it today and forward it to Graham Dorman. You can pay by Cheque or Direct Deposit (Account details are given on the form. Please reference your Direct Deposit with your name so the Treasurer can recognise your deposit.) If you are using the suggested instalment plan of paying for your place then the second instalment was due in mid November.

Questions: please contact me if you have any queries.

Peace and all good,

Keith Slater tssf
keithslater@gmail.com
Convenor



MATTERS OF FAITH

By: Bishop Jeremy Ashton

What is your relation to the created world? Are you the master? A steward? A fellow-worker? In the first book of the Bible (Genesis) there are two accounts of Creation which make sense to the Jews. Other religions and communities (such as the Indigenous people of this land) have their own stories to explain how the world came to be what it is. In today’s scientific world, we have a different take on creation, but the old stories have much to teach us about the Why if not the How.

In one Genesis account (chap 2), Man (Adam) is the Master. He is created first and names all the animals, thus being granted authority over them. In the other (chap 1) we read, as (God) have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food...and to everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for foods. This tells us that we share with other creatures. In the Book of Wisdom (chap 9), while we read at first, as By your wisdom, you (God) have formed us to have dominion over all your creations: but this is not the whole: it continues as to be stewards of the world in holiness and righteousness and to administer justice with an upright hearts.

I believe that for too long humans in the western world have behaved as Masters and have fouled the created world for our short term benefit. There is a wonderful hymn by an American, James K Manley, is Take off your shoes, you’re standing on holy grounds (an Australian version is in Together in Song no 651), depicting the damage we have done with freeways, factories, fertilisers, fighting. Scientists tell us that we have left the Industrial Age and moved into the Anthropocene Age when human activity has been the dominant force on the environment. If we do not learn to co-operate with other creatures perhaps we shall be the next species to become extinct!

God saw that his creation is good. We need to take our role as stewards in that creation much more seriously than we have recently. St Paul wrote to the Romans (chap 8) that the whole of creation was groaning”. Can we lessen that groaning” by being more respectful, such as in the way we use and dispose of plastic, by being aware of the effect of pesticides when they leave the farm and get into waterways, by advocating for the well-being of pigs and hens in our demand for meat. With Remembrance Day we are reminded of the damage that war has done and is still doing not only to us but to the rest of creation. Being peacemakers is a part of how we express our stewardship. We have dominion, but unless we use it responsibly, it will be taken away from us.

Isaiah 9:6

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.



New Minister General for Third Order of Society of Saint Francis

Posted on: September 26, 2017 11:57 AM

The Revd John Heberton, the new minister general of the Third Order of St Francis, with his predecessor, the Revd Ken Norian.

The Revd John Heberton, the vicar of Gate Pa, Tauranga, in New Zealand’s North Island’s Bay of Plenty, has been elected as the new minister general of the Third Order of St Francis. Heberton, who has spent most of his 30-year ordained ministry working with youth organisations, becomes the “functional head” and “servant” of the international Anglican Franciscan movement, which brings together “men and women, clergy or lay, who are called to a lifelong discipline and vow”. He succeeds the Revd Ken Norian from the US-based Episcopal Church.

Heberton was elected at the recent sexennial meeting of the Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC), which was held at the High Leigh Conference Centre in south-east England. IPTOC is a gathering of ministers provincial and representatives of the orders five provinces: the Pacific (Aotearoa-New Zealand and Polynesia with Melanesia), Americas, Europe, Africa; and the Asia Pacific (Australia, Papua New Guinea and East Asia). held every 6 years.

His responsibilities include co-ordinating the interprovincial life of the Third Order, convening its meetings of ministers, and calling the next IPTOC meeting in 2023. He will also be responsible for implementing the decisions taken at the recent IPTOC meeting.

“This is a huge honour and a humbling responsibility to be minister general at this time,” Heberton said. “At our recent IPTOC the Spirit of God was clearly moving in a number of our provinces, calling us to renew our identity as Franciscans.”

He continued: “800 years ago Francis of Assisi heard the crucified and risen Christ call him to rebuild the church. He did not see this as building the institution, but simply living the gospel, and living the gospel simply.

“On his death bed he told his closest brothers that he had done what was his to do, and invited them to listen as Christ showed them what was theirs. Francis says the same to us today. We are being invited to hear again how we might rebuild the church in the way of Francis and Clare.

“Two significant themes that came out of IPTOC were the need to be more intentional in our ongoing formation as we grow in our lives following Christ in the way of Francis and Clare; and the desire to use the ever increasing technology to do this together rather than separately in our five provinces.”

Married with three adult children, Heberton lives in Mount Maunganui, Tauranga. He has been a Third Order Franciscan since 1993 and was life professed in 1995. He has served the Franciscan community as a novice counsellor, area chapter representative and area chaplain. From 2006 – 20015 he was minister provincial for the Pacific.

The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis is the present-day revival of the order of Brothers and Sisters of Penance, which was founded by Francis after he received the call to rebuild the church. “Early in his ministry, Francis recognised the need to include people from all walks of life within his movement of reform and renewal,” Heberton said. “The work of following Christ in humility, love and joy, which is the vocation of all Christians, could not be restricted to the traditional life of the Friars and Sisters. This was true in the 13th century and it remains so today.”

Today, there are estimated to be over a half-million Franciscans worldwide in the Christian family, including First Order brothers and sisters who live a celibate life in their respective communities, and the Third Order, which consists of men and women, single or in committed relationships who, though following ordinary professions, are called to a dedicated life of service through prayer, study, and work.



Glenys McCarrick with her mother Fay Leutton and daughter Amanda McCarrick on Amanda’s Profession Day at St Mark’s Clayfield in September.

St Francis Has Three Sisters

By: Dawn Punter

At our last Third Order meeting, we were able to witness a most unusual occurrence, where we saw three generations of a family combine as members of the Third Order. We were all able to rejoice with Amanda, Glenys and Fay along with Elsie who had been Amanda’s novice counsellor.

What a privilege to be able to walk in the footsteps of Francis and Clare serving our Lord in the company of two other family members. There would be celebration in heaven over this.

Congratulations to all three of you!

A Reflection for Advent - Waiting.

By: Revd John Gibson
Provincial Chaplain

Each 'Prayer of the week' (from "A Prayer Book for Australia") for each Sunday in Advent has as one of its key words either *came, come, or coming*,

Trains nowadays are fast and passengers waiting at the station very often have little warning of their arrival. What a difference as I go back in memory to my early childhood to the days of steam. The train could be heard and the smoke or steam from the funnel could be seen in the distance, for a long time before the train entered the country station. Passengers and station staff had plenty of warning to be prepared, and the passengers gathered up their luggage, and began saying their goodbyes before the train came in.

In some ways the season of Advent is like the distant sounds of an old-fashioned train steamed into the station. Advent gives us notice in advance that Christ is coming, not only of his first coming as a baby in a manger, but of the message he brings to humankind, and of his future coming as our Divine Judge. In addition to its emphasis upon Christ and his coming, there are other things about Advent that this illustration of the train suggests to our minds.

We have seen, at the approach of the train, everybody waiting has their own particular things to see to, luggage to collect, good-byes to say, and in the case of the railway employees various duties to perform. When Advent gives each of us notice of Christ's coming, we all have our own special response to make, depending on the circumstances of our own lives. It may speak to us of faults to sweep away, of duties neglected, of tasks to perform and opportunities to take.

When some of the people on the platform heard the train they knew that in a few moments they would be on board it and moving out of the station, perhaps to return to it in a few hours or days, perhaps never to come back. Advent reminds us that even if we live in some quiet spot all our days our lives are continually on the move. There are constantly fresh things to do, different temptations to fight, fresh circumstances that makes calls on our courage, our wisdom, or our kindness of heart.

The journey of life is not the only one we take. For us all, there is also the journey of death. Our life in this world will not go on for ever. Some time, perhaps in the distant future, perhaps far sooner than we think, we must pass from this world to a new life, and we should be prepared for the journey.

Not all the people the train carried into the station were still on it when it steamed out. Some passengers got off, because they had reached their destination. For some of those who did so friends were waiting, who had come to welcome them, perhaps after a long absence. Welcome too, were the newspapers, personal parcels, and the mail which the train often brought. So a train often brought happiness to a station.

Our thoughts of Christ's coming to the world, and to ourselves, are naturally solemn ones, but we must not let the

solemn side blind us to the joyful side of Advent. In Advent we are getting ready to welcome to our hearts somebody who loves us, and to whom we are invited to love in return. That is a happy task. We should be glad of the time given to us to prepare ourselves for Jesus, and should make good use of it. St Francis in his prayer gives us a good lead.

"St Francis' Prayer For The Day" - 'Help us to live this day quietly, gently. To lean upon your great strength trustfully, restfully. To wait for the unfolding of your will patiently, serenely. To meet others peacefully, joyously. To face tomorrow confidently, courageously. tomorrow confidently, courageously.'

Third Order Conference and General Chapter 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings in Christ.

Please find attached a copy of the Information Sheet and Registration Form for the tssf 2018 Conference and General Chapter which the Qld B/NNSW Region is hosting. The dates of the Conference are Thursday 14 June through to Sunday 17 June 2018. It will take place at the QCCC- Brookfield Conference Centre. (This is a non-alcoholic venue.)

The theme for the Conference focuses upon **"Imagining a new world"**, and asks the questions:

What does Franciscan spirituality look like in the 21st century?
And

What impact can it have upon the world today?

This is a Conference which will encourage us to explore more deeply our Franciscan calling: our call into deep relationship with God and our sending forth being engaged with gospel matters in the world at large, and particularly where we live.

You will note there are options how to Register and suggestions how to pay the Conference costs in instalments.

I encourage you to Register **now** and pay your Deposit confirming your intention of engaging in this exciting Conference as Third Order community. Registering now will be an encouragement to the Working Group that is engaged in preparing the Conference.

If you have any questions, please forward them to the Convenor, Keith Slater, at keithslater@gmail.com

I look forward to welcoming you to the Conference in June next year.

Peace and all good,

Ray Clifton tssf
(Regional Minister QldB/NNSW)

N.B. The attached Registration Form is an electronic form. If responding electronically, double click to open, tap on each line and insert information, fill out the Registration Form, save it, and then forward to g.a.dorman@bigpond.com

ADVENT - A SEASON FOR REFLECTION

By: Colin Fidock

Advent is a season that seems to get lost in our culture. Because we so often think of the month of December as “the Christmas season” and use this time to busily prepare our homes for the holidays, we often neglect to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.



As has been part of our tradition and one each of us has welcomed each year, the Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches representing eternity a symbol of eternal life. Normally made of green pine this colour represents hope. Four candles and a fifth [which represents the light of Christ coming into the world] are placed on this wreath.

The lighting of an Advent wreath is a custom that began in 16th-century Germany among Lutherans and Catholics. In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24.

Symbolism of the Advent Wreath Candles set on the branches of the Advent wreath are four candles: three purple candles and one pink candle. A more modern tradition places a white candle in the centre of the wreath. On each week of Advent on Sunday morning, a particular Advent candle is lit and specific prayers are offered.

Symbolism differs in what the candles represent. Catholic tradition states that the four candles, represent the four weeks of Advent, each standing for one thousand years, to total the 4,000 years from the time of Adam and Eve until the birth of the Saviour.

- Prophecy – the birth foretold [purple]
- Love – Bethlehem and the manger [purple]
- Joy – the shepherd’s and great joy [pink]
- Angel’s candle – peace [purple]
- On Christmas Eve, the white candle is lit. This candle is called the “Christ Candle” and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world.

For me, ADVENT signifies the need to focus on each day as we step out as sisters and brothers in our calling to serve God following in the footsteps of our Brother Francis. The season itself brings to a culmination of a year of ADVENTure one we have endeavoured to fulfil in:

PEACE, HOPE, LOVE AND MOST OF ALL, JOY.

The Privilege of Poverty

Taken from: “Eucharistic Adoration”
By: Betty Shakal, FSPA (Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration)



Consider – Clare wrote a series of letters to her friend Agnes, princess of Prague, before her entrance into religious life. Clare writes to her about the poverty she had learned from Francis. Poverty was very dear to Clare because she wanted to give her full attention to God. In an age when upper-class women who depended on their dowries had servants who took care of all temporal cares and menial duties. Clare invented a gospel lifestyle marked by sisterly communion, prayer and manual labour. The sisters depended on their needlework and on the vegetables they grew in their small garden plots. Actual physical poverty – having nothing - fostered their union with God. For Clare, holy poverty was an expression of her total union with God. It became the central work of her life to see that the right and privilege to live with nothing of one’s own would be assured to her sisters forever.

Contemplate – Jesus, you know how Clare’s practice and example of poverty challenges me, even as it challenged Agnes. And you know how her generosity scares me. Yet, the example of Jesus and of Francis and Clare continues to draw me. Jesus came into the world with nothing and lay in a manger meant for the animals. As Matthews writes: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (8:20). Jesus, be the center of my life. Let me follow your example, and be free to love. Amen.

Imitate – Reflect on Clare’s poverty and also upon the challenge she places before Agnes to accept poverty. What challenge does she place before you? How will you answer it?

Isaiah 11:1-3

*A shout shall come out from
the stump of Jesse.
and a branch shall grow out of
his roots.*



*The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit wisdom and
understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the
fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.*

Jack Winslow and the Formation of the Anglican Third Order in the 20th Century.

Jack Copley Winslow was born on 18 August 1882 into a religious family in Hanworth, Middlesex, England; his father was an Anglican clergyman and Mary Winslow, one of his great-grandmothers, was a renowned evangelist of the nineteenth century

While preparing for ordination, after he finished his graduation at Oxford University, he visited India. He was impressed by the work of Anglican missionaries, who were presenting Christianity in terms of Hindu culture. In 1907, he became a deacon, was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1908.

Missionary work

In 1914, he was sent as a missionary for Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG); first, he was stationed near Bombay, where he devoted most of his time in learning Marathi language. Between 1915 and 1919, he served as principal of Mission High School, Ahmednagar, where he met Narayan Waman Tilak, an Indian poet. From Tilak, he learnt the significance of bhakti, singing bhajans, and Indian devotional songs, for Christian worship and evangelism. With Tilak's conversion, his belief was further reinforced that Hindus would be influenced by the person of Jesus Christ.

Christa Seva Sangha Ashram

While on leave in England in 1919 he had "mysterious experiences" he described as "revelation and divine guidance" that in order to reach the Indian people with the gospel message he should use the models of Hindu ashrams. As opposition increased against British rule in India Jack realized that by embracing Indian culture the mission to bring Christianity would be better served.

Upon his return to India in 1920, he formed the initial nucleus of the ashram community called *Christa Seva Sangha*, The fellowship of the Servants of God and/or The Christian fellowship of Service. This Christian ashram was formally inaugurated on 11 June 1922. The aims of the society were bhakti devotion and study of sacred texts and service, especially for the sick and suffering, and evangelism. In brief, its initial object was on meditation, study of the scriptures, and the development of Indian ways for the expression of Christian life and worship.

For worship, Indian devotional songs would be sung with local Indian musical instruments. In architecture, churches would follow the design of Hindu temples.

On the walls, exemplary figures of different religious traditions would be used like Isaiah in the temple, Gautama Buddha beneath the Bodhi tree, Sita for wifely faithfulness, and Ruth the Moabite to signify the self-sacrificing affection. His mentor, Bishop Palmer, granted Jack Winslow permission to proceed.

Having sensed *Christa Seva Sangha* community would collapse in 1926, he used his leave in England to raise funds and recruit new community members. He met William Strahan Robertson aka Father Algy, an Anglo-Catholic, at the Student Christian Movement conference (SCM) held in Swanwick; He also looped-

in two more SCM friends Verrier Elwin and Fielding-Clarke from Oxford and ped-in two more SCM friends Verrier Elwin and Fielding-Clarke from Oxford and several laymen to join him in his new ashram.

The new community members from Oxford and Cambridge joined Christa Seva Sangha with a permanent ashram established at Pune in November 1927. By 1930, the community had grown to thirty. The community expanded its ashram activities by undertaking literary and educational work in Pune. Winslow started giving lectures in the city, holding retreats and running a student hostel. He built up the Federation of International Fellowship to bring together groups of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and other religious groups for prayer and discussion on social, economic and political problems that India was facing.

He was sympathetic with Gandhi and other leaders of the Indian national movement, and took on the Indian name Swami Devadatta, the One given by God. He wore Khadi, a symbol of Indian nationalism, and hosted lectures at the ashram on non-violence.

Christa Prema Seva Sangha

After Winslow departed to England in 1934, *Christa Seva Sangha* split into two ashrams:

1. *Christa Seva Sangha*, based at Oudh with community members supporting Winslow's ideals;
2. *Christa Prema Seva Sangha*, the Community of the Service of the Love of Christ, based at Poona with members supporting Franciscan spirituality. This ashram grew bigger with more Westerners entering who were influenced by the Franciscan movement in the Anglican Church. They wanted to form a Franciscan monastic community in line with the European model. It is believed that Celibacy played a major role in the split of the original ashram.

Jack Copley Winslow also penned hymns that are well known and sung today. For example, Lord of Creation to You be All Praise (TiS 626).

Third Order TSSF

The basis of our Principles are the Rule of Christa Seva Sangha at Poona and Jack Winslow's foundation work continues to inspire Tertiaries.

Reflections.

Jack Winslow was a man who heard God's call upon his life and dedicated himself totally to spreading the teachings, life and purpose of Jesus Christ.

Day 5 - The First Aim – to make our Lord known and loved everywhere.

His vision for an Ashram where Indians could encounter Jesus within their own cultural context would have been quite radical in his time (even now). Like Francis he wanted nothing to get in the way of the gospel so that many could believe. As Francis shone the light of the gospel against the reality of a church that had lost contact with the ordinary people – Jack's approach did the same against British Imperialism, a strong political stance that was sympathetic to Indian nationalism and the desire for freedom from British rule and exploitation. His incorporation of elements from the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim traditions

revealed his vision for interfaith understanding and respect for all races and creeds. His was a gentler and more accepting approach to evangelism than what was the usual heavy-handed methods of his time. Jack's vision of racial, gender and cultural equity.

Day 3 : The Object TSSF consists of those who, while following the ordinary professions of life, feel called to live their lives under a definite discipline and vows. They may be female or male, married or single, lay or ordained.

His teaching, study, training and retreats and lectures on interfaith issues were aimed at building bridges.

Day 7: To spread the spirit of love and harmony. To fight against injustice.

Day 9: To promote peace.

Day 10: To Live Simply

The work that the Christa Seva Sangha eventually undertook followed the example of Francis and Clare in their love of the poor, sick and outcast.

Day 13: Three ways of service, Prayer, Study and Work.

Like Francis he experienced conflict and a split between the two communities, a difficult and painful time given his vision for unity.

Day 23: Humility – ‘No spiritual house can stand for a moment except on the foundation of humility.’

A similar struggle for Francis and Jack!

Jack continued his love and service to God until the age of 91. He is a great inspiration to us all.! We continue to build on his foundation through applying ourselves to live according to our personal rule of life and the Principles of TSSF.

Jack Winslow returned to Poona in late January 1974 and spent three weeks visiting the ashram he founded. He died shortly after his return on 29 March 1974.

(This is an edited version of a talk given recently by Hilary Singleton tssf)

Shout to the Lord because the Savior is born!

Excerpt Taken from: “ Advent and Christmas Wisdom”

Compiled by John V. Kruse

“Vespers Of The Lord's Birth”

Exult in God our help!

Shout to the Lord God living and true with cries of gladness!

Because the Lord, the Most High,

The awesome, is the Great King over all the earth.

Because the Most Holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages, sent His Beloved Son from on high,

And He was born of the Blessed Virgin Holy Mary.

He called to me: You are my Father

And I will place Him, my first born, as the Highest,

Above all kings of the earth.

Celebrating St Francis’ Day

Sunday 8th October, 2017

at St Philip’s Anglican Church,
Annerley, Qld



The Rt Rev Godfrey Fryar and
Br Donald Campbell

Franciscan & Holy Days To Note

2017

- December 1** Requiem for all departed Franciscans
- December 8** Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- December 25** THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

2018

- January 16** The First Franciscan Martyrs
- February 9** Anglican Franciscan Pioneers
- February 14** Ash Wednesday
- March 30** Good Friday
- April 1** Easter Sunday
- April 11** Brother Geoffrey SSF
- May 16** Margaret of Cortona
- May 20** Bernardine of Sienna
- May 29** Jack Winslow
- June 13** Anthony of Padua

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

While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.

Francis of Assisi

HONOURING OUR ELDERS

The Revd Elsie Clack

By: Revd Peter Lockyer



Elsie was professed in New Zealand on 30th May, 1970. The commitment she made in her vows then has held her faithfully to the Third Order through the years that have followed. Born in 1944, Elsie grew up in Greymouth on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. She came to Australia planning to stay for two years to see if she missed her homeland. Her plan was to go on and live in England. She says, "It has been a long 2 years as I am still here and never did get to live in England".

Looking back on New Zealand church life in her early days Elsie feels the teaching was perhaps more authoritarian; more black and white in its discipline. Worshipping at the cathedral in Hamilton she came to know of St. Francis and was attracted to his manner of life when the First Order Brothers came to conduct a mission. She joined a friend as a Companion of SSF. Journeying into God she, like me, with other Companions, was drawn on by the Brothers to become Tertiaries in the Third Order. Her noviciate was under the guidance of the late Mrs. Margaret Kelly in New Zealand. Profession took place at a Third Order retreat conducted by Br. Reginald SSF in the Retreat House in Wellington where all their retreats were held.

I first met Elsie in 1973 at a Third Order retreat also conducted by Br. Reginald who was the Provincial Minister for the First Order at that time. We were gathered in St. Margaret's School, Albion, along with Noel Hanby, Bishop Tony Hall-Matthews, Helen Granowski, John and Gillian Kaines. Denis Woodbridge, Margaret Butters and others. There, Tony asked Elsie to go to Normanton to be Nanny for their children while Valerie, his wife, ran the kindergarten. She stayed with them for 12 months.

In the early days (in Australia) the organisation of the Third Order was somewhat loose. Br. Reginald began to put a more defined structure in place. Father James Warner was appointed the first Guardian and he was followed by Lorraine Hines. Br. Alan Barnabas, SSF, was given the task of travelling widely in Australia making contact with professed tertiaries and other people interested in the Third Order. Through the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the TO was "breaking its teeth" and moving toward autonomy under the umbrella of SSF, Br. Alan Barnabas asked Elsie to help him by becoming the Secretary for Australia. In those days the number of tertiaries was much smaller and the Role nowhere near as intensive or extensive as it is today. Elsie held this Office for the three year term. As Secretary, she had the joy and pleasure, along with Lorraine Hines and Alan Barnabas, of attending the first IPTOC, commonly known as "The Gospel Now Conference", held in Dorset, England in 1981.

Elsie has a close affinity with St. Francis' manner of life, his care for others especially the poor and marginalised, his passion for bringing people to wholeness through faith in God. She began her working life in the nursing home run by the Church Army in Hamilton, NZ. Before going to Normanton she worked in the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Since ordination in 1999, Elsie, among her other duties which included hospital ministry, has been an Honorary Assistant Curate in St. Thomas', Toowong. Today, in retirement, she is still engaged in Hospital Chaplaincy in The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. As the church and the world change Elsie continues to have a close association with the three orders of SSF, their life and work. She recognises, while people continue to be called to leave all and follow Christ as monks and nuns, there is a rising new movement; a new monasticism. This response, as she knows, is often taking new and exciting forms that complement the traditional forms of religious life. Such groups of people are committing themselves to follow a simple rule of life, keep a pattern of daily prayer, have a concern for the poor and marginalised, and share a form of extended community in a similar manner to that which, all those years ago, St. Francis intended for the Third Order. Those groups and we have important roles to play as we demonstrate the vitality of the church and the continuing relevance of the religious life today. Elsie has a concern that we in the Third Order do not lose sight of St. Francis' challenge to the church in his day and now. The challenge to be disciplined and devoted to Christ, calling the world to simplicity and service under God. We thank Elsie for her continuing faithfulness to her original commitment to



Prayers received from Merrill Ruback on her Prayer Day

From: Jeannie Minnis

CANTICLE TO THE TRINITY . . .

Written By: Brahmabandab Uphadhyay

I bow to Him who is Being, Consciousness and Bliss.
I bow to Him whom worldly minds loathe, Whom pure minds
yearn for, The Supreme Abode.

He is the Supreme, The Ancient of days, The
Transcendent, Indivisible Plenitude, Immanent yet above all
things. Three-fold relation, Pure, unrelated knowledge beyond
knowledge.

The Father, Sun Supreme Lord, unborn, The seedless
seed of the tree of becoming, The cause of all, Creator,
Providence, Lord of the Universe.

The infinite and perfect Word, The Supreme person
begotten, Sharing in the Father's nature, Conscious by
essence, Giver of true Salvation.
He who proceeds from Being and Consciousness Replete
with the breath of perfect bliss The purifier, the Swift, The
Revealer of the Word the Life-giver.



From: Hilary (Baart)

Lord, help me to remember that the main
thing is to remember that I seek the kingdom of God
beholding Your beauty, inquiring in Your temple. That is
all that is truly important, not whether or not I get all my
work done at home, the office, or church.

As I receive requests for my time and
ability, give me wisdom to say yes or no in accordance
with Your will.

***Lord God,
who taught Elizabeth of Hungary
to recognize and reverence Christ in the
poor of this world:
by her example,
strengthen us to love and serve the afflicted
and the needy,
and so to honour your Son, the servant
king,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen***

The Franciscan Genius:

Integration of the Negative

Franciscan Poverty

Taken from: [Franciscan Poverty - Center for Action and Contemplation](https://cac.org/franciscan-poverty-2015-06-18/)

<https://cac.org/franciscan-poverty-2015-06-18/>

Franciscan mysticism is especially poised and prepared to lead people not only to inner experience, but to the possibility of daily and regular experience in the depth and beauty of the ordinary. Franciscan spirituality can do this precisely because it incorporates the seeming negative and moves our life to its hard edges, thus making things like failure, tragedy, and suffering the quickest doorways to the encounter of God. All can now enter if they are honest about their “poverty,” which is a central theme for Francis.

Poverty for Francis is not just a life of simplicity, humility, restraint, or even lack. Poverty is the freedom to recognize that *myself—by itself—is powerless and ineffective*. This is not a low self-image but a very liberating and utterly honest self-image. In his Gospel, John puts it quite honestly when he says that a branch that does not abide in a Higher Power “is withered and useless” (John 15:6). The transformed self, living in union, no longer lives in shame or denial of its weakness, but *even lives with rejoicing* because it does not need to pretend that it is any more than it actually is—which is now, ironically, more than enough!

Paul understood this kind of joy. God revealed to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” This gave Paul the courage to write, “I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

There is nothing that God cannot and will not use to bring us to divine union—even sin. That is the full glory, effectiveness, and universality of the Gospel in its simple and clear splendor. In short, Francis democratizes the whole spiritual journey, and lets us know that it is available outside of monasteries, celibacy, moral heroics, or any false asceticism. This has not always been obvious in most Christian (or non-Christian) spirituality. Surely, this is why G.K. Chesterton called Francis “the world’s one quite sincere democrat.” The Gospel sense of “poverty of spirit” (Matthew 5:3) is the first necessary Beatitude because it allows us to join the whole human race in a willing and honest way. All pedestals are henceforth unnecessary.

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My Franciscan Journey

By: Michael Hobbs

My teacher training was at Chester Church of England Teacher Training College in England where I met a fellow student who introduced me to the Third Order. I qualified as a teacher and started my career in the profession. I was a Church of England lay reader for several years. I started on the Franciscan path and became a novice. I went to several Franciscan meetings and retreats, and on one retreat at Alton in Hampshire we were to have Br. Adrian as our director but he had trapped his fingers when the wind caught his car door and Br. Francis took over. Sometime after the retreat I gave the Third Order a rest and continued with my secular career.

Many years later we retired to Australia and I felt a very strong calling to the Third Order. I found St Philip’s Anglican Church, Annerley, Brisbane, on the internet. So, my wife Sheila and I went to a Saturday evening service there. I then followed it up by going on a retreat with the Third Order at St Margaret’s Anglican Girls School in Brisbane which was run by the nuns.

There were no records of my previous association with the Third Order in England so I started from scratch and was noviced at Saint Mary’s Anglican Church, Lismore. As far as I know I was the only Third Order person in Northern New South Wales at that time. My Novice Councillor was Ray Kendall and I was professed 15-11-2003 at my parish church Saint Bartholomew’s Alstonville by the Rt Rev Bevan Meredith. Sometime later I was asked by Regional Minister Rev. Cleone Rolf-Reardon to be the area convenor for a new TSSF group in Northern New South Wales. Working with Bishop Keith and Rev Cleone Rolf-Reardon, we organised A Taste of Saint Francis at Yamba in 2004 for anyone to come to – it was well attended. I was area convenor for the NSW group for seven years from 2004 to 2011, and our first local meeting on September 2005 we held our retreats annually and our regular meetings several times a year in our own area. I have used my Rule of Life as my template to help me with my Christian life which was a bit haphazard before.

Day 25 – Community

Obedience

Love

Jesus said, ‘I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one another.’ (John 13:34-35) Love is the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ who wish to dedicate themselves to him as his servants.

The Nativity scene at Greccio and the Tradition of the Crèche

Taken From: Franciscan Missionaries serving in the Holy Land

In the New Testament

www.bethlehem.custodia.org/default.asp?id=520Taken

In the Old Testament



The town of Bethlehem is mentioned 44 times in the Old Testament and is given the name “Bethlehem of Judea”, from the tribe to which it belonged, to distinguish it from the homonymous locality belonging to the tribe of Zebulun in Galilee.



The faith in the fulfillment of the prophetic announcement of the birth in Bethlehem of a descendant of David was well rooted in the Judaic tradition at the time of Jesus. Indeed, when Herod asked the high priests where the Messiah was to be born they replied without hesitation: “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet” (Matt 2:5)

One common way today of transmitting the memory of the birth of Jesus is through the tradition of the crèche. St. Francis is credited with having created the first crèche in history. The hagiographic tradition relates, albeit without historical certainty, that when Francis went to the Holy Land he had gone to Bethlehem and, bringing home with him the memory of the Town where the Savior was born, he then reproduced the scene of the Nativity on the famous Christmas Eve in Greccio (1Cel 84-86).

In fact, Francis, anxious to make tangible to the faithful the experience of the Son of God, humbled and incarnate in human form, wanted to put in place such a representation, as is recounted in the biographies of the saint by both Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure. In these accounts it is related that Francis prepared a manger with hay, had an ox and a donkey brought there, and then had a Holy Mass celebrated in front of it, before a large crowd of people who had come from all over the region. His love for the Solemnity of Christmas and his devotion to the image of the Nativity found its highest inspiration in the Mystery of the Incarnation, where the saint recognized the humbleness and poverty of the birth of the Messiah. Francis saw this, the renewal of oneself in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where Jesus descends each day through the hands of the priest.

The accounts paint a picture of great simplicity and tenderness, in which on Christmas Eve 1223 Francis prepared the Eucharistic celebration, requesting assistance from his friend Giovanni Velita in the preparation of some items needed to represent the scene of the Child’s birth in Bethlehem and, as he himself said: “to see with the eyes of the body the hardships in which he was placed because of the necessities for a newborn that were lacking” (1Cel).

The Holy Night came and Francis along with the friars and several faithful went to the place where the manger had been set up with hay, a donkey and an ox. “Some sweet words” were preached by Francis, and then a vision of the Child appeared on the hay. The miraculous event stirred up the animals and moved the hearts of many who felt themselves touched by what had happened. Through this action the saint wanted to make it easy for the faithful to understand the Mystery of the Incarnation.

Devotion, a characteristic of Franciscan spirituality, certainly contributed to the development of the practice of representing the Nativity scene, a practice which has continued to the present day. In preparation for the Solemnity of the Nativity on the Eve before Christmas, in the Grotto of the Nativity the episode of the Crèche at Greccio is evoked by the Franciscan friars, with the protagonist being Father Francis of Assisi in contemplation of the Mystery of the Incarnation.

Joy To The World The Lord Has Come

Reflections

Why Chickens?

By: Mac Campbell

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, chickens ruled the world.

Not long after the beginning, the world spun, the sun warmed, and tides sucked in and out, tectonic plates smashed; volcanoes vomited and grass grew and snakes slithered.

Making new stuff? Everything that was already made did its thing. The earth cracked and rumbled, things got confused; there were lots of accidents. Cats fell out of trees; stuff got broken; some got fixed and some didn't. Lots of death. New things came from the mess.

And the little red hen said, "Let's make Jumans out of this mess".

"What's a Juman?" asked a blue Australorp. (You'd probably call her "grey", but chickens have different names for colours).

"Well", said the little red hen, "What about a Juman with a big brain and opposable thumbs, so Jumans could grow genetically modified corn... save us scratching all day".

All the chooks cheered and clucked and squawked! "Carried away with herself, the little red hen squawked, "Jumans could make us snake-proof houses and we wouldn't have to watch for hawks and foxes and big rats". But then....

Out of the bushes staggered Hildegard, who was so old she hadn't laid an egg for years. Nobody noticed her for a long time. Hildegard spoke up, "Listen everybody."

"If we make somebody new in the world, we should make somebody who can understand our real problem." But they all squawked right back at Hildegard, "having to scratch and having to watch out for predators, they are real problems!"

"Ah", said Hildegard. "You don't understand our real problem!"

And the little red hen said, "Ok you mad old chook, what's our real problem?" "What do you think it is?"

"Ah!" said Hildegard. "Ah!" she said. "Our real problem is the Mystery of Loss."

"Our real problem is the Mystery of Loss." "What's this Mystery of Loss?"

"Hildegard replied, "When we first hatch out, all of us have 100% love. But it's pretty much downhill from there. Sure we enjoy the sun, laying eggs and clucking over young ones, but our real problem is disability, loss, risk, and death. That's the Mystery of Loss".

So the little red hen asked old Hildegard, "How could Jumans help chickens with the Mystery of Loss?"

Hildegard replied, "To help us with the Mystery of Loss, Jumans would have to show us caring, hope, courage, empathy and respect." She was yelling now. "Don't even think about opposable thumbs."

The little red hen almost choked at the insult.



"Jumans," squawked old Hildegard, (she was a French Favarel) "would have to understand disability and sickness from the inside. Jumans would have to know risk, loss, and 100% death rate, just like us."

So that's how Jumans came to be made. With opposable thumbs.

So if you've got a snake-proof, rat proof, rain-proof hen house with 500mm of deep litter for scratching, a dust bath, an automatic feeder and an automatic waterer with lots of drinking points, and curtains on your laying boxes and a special place for respite care when a hen gets broody, and plenty of green vegies in the garden for their health, and worm them every three months, and give them extra protein when they're moulting, it could just show you've got a big brain and opposable thumbs.

TSSF – The Second Aim: *To spread the spirit of love and harmony.*

By: Lahdo Soner

Each year I travel to spend some time with my family in Motala, Sweden.

While I was recently there, I entered into a weekly 'pilgrimage' at our local church. Each Wednesday, before prayer, we would walk through seven stations of Christian graces for quiet reflection. The first was *freedom*, then *tranquillity*, followed by *simplicity*, *fearlessness*, *silence*, *generosity*, and *spirituality*.

On my way to church each Sunday morning I would often meet a couple walking on their way to play bowls. I would speak to them and found that his name was Andrew and hers was Mary.

Then the week after Palm Sunday I saw Andrew walking by himself, and knew something was wrong. I asked him where Mary was, and he told me that she had become very violent and the police had taken her to hospital.

I told him that I was on my way to church and asked if he would like me to pray for them and light a candle. He said 'yes' and thanked me. I remembered that I had a small cross in my pocket and so I gave it to him. "Can you please give this to Mary?" I asked.

Two weeks later I saw them both together again. Andrew was very happy to see me. He told Mary that I was her friend who had prayed and lit a candle and sent the cross for her. The reason I am sharing this story is that I saw in them the deep connection we all have with God. In their own way they reflected the Godly graces: they were free, tranquil, simple, brave, silent, generous and spiritual. They too are God's chosen people.

Perhaps through this small act, their minds may turn to God sometimes. I believe that every action in God's name has a positive action. Who knows – next time I come I might find them in church.

Peace and all Good



How I found St Francis

By: Siobhan Carson

I had been an atheist for the longest part of my life and had never set foot in a church, but during winter 2014 I found myself living rough, wandering hopelessly around the streets, cold, wet and windy.

At some point I came across an Anglican church which I paused to admire. There was something about the place which was calling me to enter. It was whilst I considered this that a kindly woman invited me into the building. Every atheist part of me scoffed and demanded that I leave, but for some reason I felt compelled to stay. So it was that I didn't leave that night and indeed from there I never walked away.

I had been studying at university before things had come crashing down. Yet in that church I could sense something offering peace, something that transgressed the very world of passing exams, or holding a prestigious career, as being the most popular, as the most important thing of life.

It was only later when I met a novice Franciscan that I realised that what I was looking for was found in God, and most of all in St. Francis. Francis who chose to cast away his status and cast away his future as a bountiful trader, all in the name of God. He gave up needing status, money and to be a noble knight, for a humble life. In Francis I also found peace, love and humility.

One day sitting in a beautiful garden, my mind was clouded by illness. All I could pray was, 'be still and know that I am God'. Suddenly I looked down and noticed butterflies, then beautiful flowers, I could hear the bird song and could feel the breeze tickling the skin on my arms and the sun warming the skin of my cheeks. I felt full of the love of Francis, Claire and God. It was my moment of presence. I finally realised that I had been existing without seeing. I had been so busy being the person others wanted me to be I didn't stop to listen. In my fast and furious life it has been so hard to find peace. To me I call it being present to the moment of presence. I am eternally grateful for each day where I can rejoice in the moment of presence surrounding me with love, and for the first time, true hope.

**“Knock, And He'll open the door
Vanish, And He'll make you shine like the sun
Fall, And He'll raise you to the heavens Become
nothing, And He'll turn you into everything.”
- Rumi**

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

or **Syrian Refugee Appeal -**

Donate to UN Refugee Agency

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our lives are a continuing Advent season – we are always striving to become, always searching, never contented with our lot, and having lists to do and never seeing them through. And yet our hopes, struggles, doubts and fears are all a recipe to the Advent experience.

We live in a world not as just and not as loving as we would like it to be, it can be, and should be. But with the coming of Christ, it gives us reason to live in hope and light will overrule darkness. That we can be liberated from our fears and prejudices and we are never alone.

May we be united in prayer, love and peace this Advent. May we prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord's birth who dwells deeply within our hearts.

The Newsletter is the voice of our Franciscan Community, please feel free to share when the Spirit calls. We also share our Faith journey, and this provides information on a Regional and overseas level.

Your co-operation and support is very much appreciated. It has been a great privilege journeying with you all in 2017. I would like to thank my band of willing helpers for your contributions and your support in your readiness to assist me this year. When sending in photos, please be sure that the photo is of high resolution.

Please send submissions to gloria@radiantpathways.com.au

The approximate date deadline for the Easter Edition is the 17th March, 2018. I look forward to hearing from you.

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.

Contacts: 07 33710265 and 0412400374

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas.

Pace e bene,

Gloria



My Daily Walk With Francis

By: James Ellis

Since being Professed as a Tertiary in August this year, I have been intentionally continuing my daily walk with Francis and Franciscan thought. When introduced to the most recent work of Fr Richard Rohr, "The Divine Dance", I could not resist the opportunity to delve into a text about a topic so mysterious yet so essential to our existence as followers of The Way.

What I love about this text is the 'revolutionary' way that the authors frame the understanding of the Trinity as relationship. They focus on how the persons of the Trinity relate with one another – and with us – more so than on the individual persons themselves. About this relationship, they have this to say:

The energy in the universe is not in the planets, or in the protons or neutrons, but in the relationship between them. Not in the particles but in the space between them. Not in the cells of organisms but in the way the cells feed and give feedback to one another. Not in any precise definition of the three persons of the Trinity as much as in the relationship between the Three! This is where all the power for infinite renewal is at work:

The loving relationship between them.

The infinite love between them.

The dance itself.

In other words, it is an entirely relational universe. If, at any time, we try to stop this flow moving through us, with us, and in us, we fall into the true state of sin—and it is truly a state more than a momentary behaviour. (Page 56)

Our commitment to following Christ in a Franciscan way really draws on this sense of being in community and relationship with each other, with Jesus, and with Francis. I know that I myself have personally experienced love and hospitality like no other since joining the Third Order. In what other group of fellow sinners could I have brothers and sisters who are in their 30s and in their 90s? That are genuinely interested in you and who we pray for by name each month?

As we head into Advent as a time of preparation, a time of waiting, a time of reflection, and a time of relationship, I encourage you to read this book which has truly changed my understanding of the Trinity. May the Holy Trinity of Love lead us into his Divine Dance and eternal relationship with each other.

From: "The Messiah"

By: Handel

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, with His arm ...



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_22uWi5ajE

Leontyne Price "He shall feed his flock" Handel' Messiah

Franciscan Aid

By: Sandra Jackson

During our Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter meeting in England in September, we had a number of guest speakers, one of whom was Richenda Milton-Daws who spoke about Franciscan Aid (FA), described as the family charity for the work of the Franciscan Orders. It is a registered charity to relieve poverty in the world's poorest countries and all requests for help need to have a Franciscan sponsor. The trustees, all of them tertiaries, decide on applications.

The money available is around \$50-51,000 annually, including legacies, donations and informal collections from tertiaries. Franciscan Aid is a thus only a small charity and cannot compete with major aid organizations like OXFAM. However, Rachenda stressed that relatively modest amounts of money in our terms make a really big difference to the lives of the individual people involved. We were given an illustrated description of the many and varied FA projects, such as helping a vocational training centre in Uganda with school fee contributions and a borehole for water, building wells for nomadic herdsmen in the Gobi Desert, repair of equipment in the only playground in Bethlehem for children at the Conflict Resolution Centre, classroom equipment for a primary school in the Philippines, devastated by a hurricane, support for the work of First Order Brothers with asylum seekers in Leeds, and supporting a foster home in a black township in South Africa. Big organizations like Save the Children Fund or OXFAM don't do these small things, but Franciscan Aid is very good at it.

Rachenda suggested five ways in which we can help: firstly, and importantly, pray for projects and people involved, then consider sponsoring an FA project as an area, raise funds as an area, make a bequest and read the FA Newsletter.

Website address: www.franciscanaid.co.uk

Interfaith Prayer for Peace

-Anonymous

O God, you are the source of life and peace.

Praised be your name forever.

We know it is you who turns our minds to thoughts of peace.

Hear our prayer in this time of crisis.

Your power changes hearts.

Muslims, Christians, and Jews remember, and profoundly affirm, that they are followers of the one God, Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters; enemies begin to speak to one another; those who were estranged join hands in friendship; nations seek the way of peace together.

Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these truths by the way we live.

Give to us:

Understanding that puts an end to strife;

Mercy that quenches hatred, and

Forgiveness that overcomes vengeance.

Empower all people to live in your law of love

Amen.

The Birth of Jesus as seen through Middle Eastern Eyes

An Edited Version

By: Monte F. Shelley

Where were the wise men from? "There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Mt 2:1-2). "If the magi [or wise men] were east of Israel and they saw his star in the east, they should have gone to India! ... In Hebrew, the word for 'East' also means 'the rising'. "Any Christian living in Rome ... would naturally think of 'the East' as Persia, and indeed the word Magi in Greek literature does refer to people from Babylonia or Parthia."

"For the Christian dwelling in the Holy Land, 'the East' would refer to the other side of the Jordan River. ... 'The East' for them would naturally refer to the Jordanian deserts that connect with the deserts of Arabia. ...

Rich people usually possess gold, and gold was mined in Arabia. ... Frankincense and myrrh are harvested from trees that only grow in southern Arabia. Wealthy dwellers of these desert regions would naturally have gold, frankincense and myrrh. ... Justin Martyr [c. AD 160] ... writes, 'The wise men from Arabia came to Bethlehem and worshipped the child and offered to him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.' ... A Bedouin tribe in Jordan ... bore the Arabic name alKokabani ... [which] means 'Those who study/follow the planets' ... because their ancestors followed the planets and travelled west to Palestine to show honour to the great prophet Jesus when he was born." 27 Isaiah prophesied of this time saying, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. ... Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

To you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and [frank]incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. Midian and Ephah are in northern Arabia, and Sheba was in southern Arabia. "Frankincense is a unique product of southern Arabia." The wise men are often depicted as three kings riding on camels bringing gold and frankincense. In these verses, "Isaiah promised special blessings for ... Jerusalem. Arabs would arrive with gifts and shepherds [tending flocks] would appear. A great light, along with the glory of God, would shine upon Jerusalem. The Gospel authors saw these promises fulfilled in the birth of a child. 'The hopes and dreams of all the years' are shifted from Jerusalem to a child born in Bethlehem.

At his birth Jewish shepherds and Gentile Arabs came together in adoration of a child in a manger."

Gift of Gold - The gift of gold was considered worthy of a king.

Gift of Frankincense - Frankincense and myrrh come from tree resins. Frankincense was once greatly valued throughout the Middle East, from Rome to India. We discover from the Bible that frankincense was used in worship.

Gift of Myrrh

Myrrh was less expensive than frankincense, but was still highly valued.. Myrrh was used for an ingredient in anointing oil. John 19:39 records that myrrh was used in Jesus' burial.



My Tribute To the Rev. Ken Reardon

By: Gordon Hooker

I began my tssf Franciscan journey back in November/December 2011 when I phoned the number attached to the back of a brochure, which I found on the table at the back of my church St. Georges at Birkdale in the Parish of Waterloo Bay. The label simply said for more information contact Ken Reardon and a phone number.

Ken was the Regional Minister for QLDB and NNSW at the time. I tried the number a few times and finally I reached Ken and I told him a little bit about myself and that I was interested in finding out a little more about the tssf. We exchanged phone calls a number of times over the next couple of months. I did try to communicate via email but Ken seemed to have trouble with email so we kept to either phone calls or good old pen, paper and Australia Post. The more I spoke to Ken the more I realised how much like my late father Ken was, the way he spoke his mannerisms.

When I first met Ken at St. Johns Cathedral in early 2012 I was surprised at how much alike they were in looks only Ken was a lot taller than my dad who was at 5'4" without his shoes on. Ken posted me all the information I needed to start the Enquirer process. I wrote my spiritual life story, and my interim Rule of Life. We would talk on the phone often about Francis and Clare and my journey at least once a week during that period. Ken was having a bit of a rough trot at that time and was getting over a bout of shingles and was not able to come down from the Sunshine Coast for my admission as a Novice so Glenys McCarrick stood in for Ken. Ken and I were in contact every couple of weeks for the next 12 months as he was my Novice Counselor, but when Kens health began to deteriorate I had to complete my journey to profession with Bill Guttormsen.

When Ken and Cleone moved to Toowoomba, it became difficult to keep in touch with Ken on a regular basis but I would write to him when I could, as he was no longer contactable on his mobile phone. When I received the news of his passing, I felt a great sense of loss but I was blessed by being able to attend his funeral at St. Barts in Toowoomba to say farewell to my brother in Christ and a good friend. It was obvious from the words of those who spoke at Ken's funeral that he had a full life and made a difference to many lives not just his family but all those he came in contact with during his life. Writing this brief tribute to Ken's life is the least I could do for him and I continue to keep Ken and Cleone in my prayers, and I thank them both for encouraging me in my Franciscan journey.



Funeral Address for Geoff Taylor

An edited version

By: The Reverend John Gibson

Psalm 121

John 14: 1-6



Today we come together as family and friends to thank God for the life of this good, loving and holy man Geoff Taylor. Geoff was one of the most humble and yet accomplished men I have ever met.

I first met Geoff soon after I came to Manuka 10 years ago. He asked me to bring communion to his wife Nancy who could no longer come to church Geoff surrounded Nancy with great love and care and together they were just wonderful.

Following Nancy's death Geoff became more involved in Parish life. He established himself in the Franciscans here in Canberra and it was here that he found a spiritual home. It seems he was heavily influenced by the Franciscan theologian Richard Rohr and in his writings Geoff quotes him. We read of Geoff approving the words: 'All we need is right here and right now – in this world. *This* is the way to *that!* Heaven includes earth'. Geoff's belief was in the sacredness of life and so Geoff goes on to say in his own words: 'The realisation that the concrete opens us up to the universal might be the only fully trustworthy or possible path'. Geoff rejected mere ideology and embraced the experiential, the practical and the very ordinary as spirituality.

But who was Geoff Taylor. He was born in 1924 in Corowa where his father was a dairy farmer. Following the collapse of the dairy industry they moved to Geelong and he was educated in Geelong Church of England Preparatory School and Geelong Grammar School. Apparently at the end of the first day of school the teacher took his mother aside and told her that Geoff was a remarkably clever little boy. That prediction has proved to be so true, although he would never tell you that. He worked for Shell, enlisted in the Navy in 1942, seeing war service, and being discharged in 1946. His passion was studying science, and majoring in geology at the University of Melbourne. He began work as a geologist at South Australia, also obtaining a Master of Science degree from the University of Adelaide. In 1953 he travelled to Germany to study for a doctorate with periods of time working in England following the award of the doctorate. He married Nancy in 1956 and two children were born – Mary and Mark, both of whom are here today with their families. From 1955 to 1980 he worked at CSIRO in North Ryde and then in 1980 took up the position of Director of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University. In 1982 he became a member of the Executive of CSIRO here in Canberra. Geoff retired from CSIRO in 1986 and became a Visiting Research Fellow in the Research School of Earth Science at ANU. It was in his early nineties that he retired from ANU. Geoff too was an accomplished author, writing several scientific books, including one in German and translating texts from German to English. His academic accomplishments were significant and he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science, a much rarer degree than a PhD.

He was from an early age fascinated by geology and this was to become the great work of his professional life. And yet he was also a man of great spirituality. For Geoff there was no conflict between science and religion. Geoff quotes approvingly from Richard Rohr again who says: 'The quest for St Francis and many religious studies begins with one massive misperception. People tend to start by making a very unfortunate, yet understandable, division between the sacred and the profane worlds'. For Geoff this made sense of his scientific mind and his religious quest – there was no division between his science and his faith. The depth of thinking here is admirable and I am reminded of the words of the poet George Herbert who said: 'and now in age I bud again'. Geoff did bud again. He found a new place for his mind and spirit and lived in the quest, not only for scientific knowledge but also spiritual enlightenment.

Here was a man who was so accomplished but so modest, so grateful for whatever you did for him. I can hear him now gratefully acknowledging visits at home or in hospital and always being interested in what I was doing. There were many people who cared for him, his family of course were always loving and caring, but others too.

The family especially wanted me to acknowledge the almost daily care of Faye Nicholas who was there at times when Geoff needed that extra bit of help. Geoff was always grateful and his family are very grateful for the help given to Geoff in his times of trial.

Geoff was an accomplished academic but he was also an accomplished man of family. It was in the concreteness of the family life that he found the universal – the love of God reflected into his life with others. Nancy, Mary and Mark and their children knew the depth of his love. I remember him telling me on many occasions how he was going to visit them or they were coming and he was so excited by that. He knew that he was loved and he knew that his love for you was received. This brought him enormous comfort and deep peace. It was in the concreteness of love and family that Geoff found the more universal notion he sought.

All this makes sense when I read some reflections Mark sent the other day. Here Mark talks of the man who made things – lovingly crafted jigsaw puzzles as well as a beautiful box for a baby's ashes. This pursuit of the beauty of wood, concrete things pointing to the universal, was something he keep doing. The last time I saw him in hospital he talked about getting back into the wood working.

Music was also part of Geoff's journey. He had a passion for music and Mark speaks of him conducting the soaring parts of symphonies in great joy and love. I remember the iPod sitting prominently in the middle of the dining room table and Geoff telling me of some new piece of music he had found.

Mark reflected that Geoff worked very hard and yet he always had time for his family. Among Geoff's things he found a letter from Mark, written as a child, admonishing his father for working so hard and exhorting him not to get too tired. The fact that Geoff kept it all these years must have meant it had great meaning for him, even though he continued to work very hard.

It was in these later years that the story of St Francis greatly affected him. It moulded the way he lived his life – giving to others. Geoff loved the story of St Francis and a follower arriving at a town to preach. They walked through the town helping people where they could with material needs, providing comfort and support for the poor. On reaching the edge of the town the follower asked St Francis when they were going to start preaching and Francis said that is what they had already been doing. Geoff had the same approach to life and people. He reached out to others in concrete and practical ways and did much good. This pointed him to and connected him with the universal. He lived his life in the model of St Francis.

Today we know that Geoff has entered the kingdom of heaven where he sees God face to face. He has lifted his eyes to the hills for it is from God that his help comes. Today it is the Lord who is his keeper in the fullness of eternal life. It is God who preserves him from all evil and leads him, watching over him in God's heavenly kingdom as God has watched over him in this earthly life. Geoff trusted the promise of Jesus, that he was the way, the truth and the life and that Jesus had gone ahead of him to prepare a place for him and that where Jesus was he would be also. Geoff spoke to me about this on many occasions. He knew he was surrounded by the love of God. It was the gospel of Christ that sustained him. Geoff faith was secure and it enlivened him.

Today we give thanks for this warm, loving, gentle and faithful man – Geoff Taylor. We give thanks to God for the love he offered his family and friends and for the love he received in return. We give thanks for his significant academic life and for his powerful spiritual quest which led him in faith to the Lord of life. We give thanks that his ministry was grounded in the concrete love of family and other and that his connected him with the universal.

As the church has said through the ages: + May he rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon him. Amen.

