



# The Province of Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SINGAPORE & SRI LANKA

## NEWSLETTER

### *Stigmata / Francistide*

**Dear Sisters and Brothers,**

By: Revd Sally Buckley.

Greetings on this Stigmata/Francistide Edition of our Provincial Newsletter!

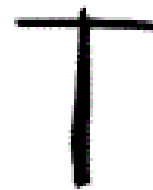
As you will be aware by now, I was appointed Assistant Provincial Minister at the Chapter meeting in Brisbane in June this year. I am very grateful to Bishop Godfrey and Chapter for this opportunity to serve the Order once again in this position. Again, I'd like to thank Sandra Jackson for her ministry in this position, especially her love and pastoral care of us all.

At the Chapter meeting this year, John Gibson chose to resign after three years as Provincial Chaplain, and Chapter elected Mandy Wheatley into that position. With a new Provincial Chaplain and Assistant Provincial Minister, it enabled our Provincial Minister to look at and redistribute the duties of each position. The Pastoral Care of the Order has returned into the keeping of the Provincial Chaplain, and this includes the prayer requests which go out to the whole Province.

For me, this redistribution has meant that I will act as a sounding board for Godfrey, but I will also take on other roles as they come up and can be of assistance to him.

One of these is looking at the Formation of Novice Counsellors around the Province. Back in 2007/8 Ted Witham, who wrote the Formation Notes, wrote a short course for training Novice Counsellors. While this may work for some groups, others may need to look at a simpler way of forming and encouraging our Novice Counsellors. Therefore, one of my current challenges is to look at ways of forming Novice Counsellors in the different cultures which make up our Province. Any comments from Regional Ministers or Novice Counsellors about what would be helpful, would be gratefully received.

Another of my "jobs" at the moment is to review our information brochure "A Life of Celebration". Due to feedback received at General Chapter, Chapter felt that it was time to review and update this brochure. I am still open to any comments or feedback anyone might like to share.



You can contact me any time either by emailing me at [assistant.minister@tssf.org.au](mailto:assistant.minister@tssf.org.au) or my personal email: [fr.sall4@gmail.com](mailto:fr.sall4@gmail.com) or by writing to me via 'snail mail' at 33 Warrington Street, Esperance, Western Australia 6450. I would love to hear from you.

Ted Witham has written elsewhere about who I am, so I will close here, as there will be quite enough about me in this issue!

I wish you all a blessed Francistide.  
Peace and every good wish,  
your 'little' sister in Francis and Clare,

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### **Collect for the Feast of St. Francis' Stigmata, September 17th**

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, when the world was growing cold, did renew in the flesh of the most blessed Francis the sacred stigmata of Thy Passion, in order to inflame our hearts with the fire of Thy love, graciously grant unto us, that yoked to his merits and prayers we may bear the Cross, and bring forth fruits worthy of penance: You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

*Pace e Bene*

Visit us on the web at [www.tssf.org.au](http://www.tssf.org.au)

## Budget and Giving

### A word from the Provincial Minister

The third order in this province as in most of the other provinces runs on a shoe string. Each year Chapter approves a budget for the following year and we work hard on sticking to it, with any expenditure having to be justified against our agreed budget projections.

Our budgeted expenditure for 2018 is \$35630, which actually anticipates a deficit of \$3715.

Our income comes entirely from subscriptions and donations from novices and professed tertiaries. While the 90 or so tertiaries in Papua New Guinea have not been expected to pay annual subscriptions at the Australian rate of \$125 single, and \$190 a couple, they are encouraged to make a donation in kina to their Regional Accounts.

Likewise, at the moment, the 8 novices in Sri Lanka are encouraged to pay a local subscription in rupees. Hopefully as the third order grows there, there will be an annual contribution made to the provincial account as well.

Various different arrangements apply to the small number of tertiaries in East Asia some of whom simply pay the set subscription to the Provincial Fund.

Within Australia we have 258 novices and professed tertiaries plus any novices who have been admitted in the last few months.

I have discovered from our Treasurer that only 132, or 55% of us Aussies have paid our subscriptions for 2018!

While we quite understand that some of our members are on low incomes and may not be able to pay the whole amount, and there are others, who are old and frail and can no longer remember to keep up, we are still running behind on what we as a community might expect.

If by chance you have forgotten your subs this year or can't recall if you have paid, please contact Glenys McCarrick and Jane Noller who handle our finances.

While paying the annual subscription is not required of tertiaries in the same way as keeping the Daily Obedience and doing the annual Renewals, subs are important to help us get by, fulfil our obligations to the wider Third Order around the world and be generous with an annual give away tithe.

If you would like a copy of the 2018 budget to date and the 2019 budget, please contact your Regional Minister for a copy.

+Godfrey tssf

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### The First Note – Humility

We always keep before us the example of Christ, who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and who, on the last night of his life, humbly washed his disciples' feet. We likewise seek to serve one another with humility.

## Matters Arising from Chapter

From: The Provincial Minister

### Provincial Secretary

Following Wayne Philp's completion of his two terms as Provincial Secretary, Chapter sought to find out just who God might have been tapping on the shoulder to serve as the next Provincial Secretary. After some inquiries the Provincial Minister was led to John Blakemore who after prayer and consideration realised that he was indeed being 'tapped'. Thank you, John, for taking up this role for tssf.

### Changes to prayer list

Please write these changes into your paper version of the Prayer Cycle. They will also be added to the electronic Daily Obedience.

Day 8

Taylor Simokua RIP

Day 14

Linda McWilliam Released from TSSF

Day 18

Monica Dennison Released from TSSF

Day 23

Daphne Edwardson RIP

### Clarification of roles for APM and PC

With the appointment of Sally Buckley as Assistant Provincial Minister and the election of Mandy Wheatley as Provincial Chaplain, the roles they fulfil have been adjusted to be more in line with our constitution and statutes. Thus, Sally will more closely assist the Provincial Minister and Mandy will assume the pastoral role of chaplain including the Provincial Prayer Circle.

### Korean developments

Progress towards the formation of the Third Order in Korea is encouraging.

We now have 6 postulants preparing for admission as novices.

They are: Nahm Woo Hee, Kim Hong Gill, Kim Min Sik, Yang Hyeran, Gim Eungyeong and Jung Hung Yeo. Please pray for them.

When we have another two or three I will plan a trip to Korea to formally admit them.

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## Community Obedience – 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 St 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 definite discipline and vows. They may be female or male, married or single, ordained or lay.

## GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER REQUESTS

All prayer requests originating in the Region are to go to the Prayer Coordinator and/or the Regional Minister. All requests must have the permission of the Tertiary or next-of-kin. Preferably, the request is to be written/sent by the person requesting it themselves.

The Prayer Request must relate to a Tertiary, Novice or immediate family (parents, spouse, child or partner)

### PROVINCIAL

Where the Prayer Request is extremely urgent, the request goes through to the Provincial Secretary for circulation to the whole Province (acute illness, accident, death or severe mental health issues of a Tertiary, spouse, child ).

### REGIONAL

The Regional Prayer Coordinator and/or Regional Minister will decide, at their discretion, the level of importance and whether the request will be circulated within the Region or be passed on to the provincial Secretary.

Less urgent prayer requests will be circulated within the Region (elective or routine surgery, non-severe mental health issues).

The following information ONLY to be included in the Prayer Request NAME OF THE PERSON TO BE PRAYED FOR:

REASON FOR REQUEST:

CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

(surgery, accident, acutely ill, death, prayer support needed)

### PERMISSION GIVEN:

The Prayer Request will stand for three (3) weeks. The Prayer coordinator will follow-up with the requester to either:

- a) Provide an outcome of the prayer request
- b) Request a further three weeks of prayer

For those not on email, prayer co-ordinator to phone or post.

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## Church leaders endorse Season of Creation in rare ecumenical joint letter

Posted on: June 13, 2018

[Ecumenical](#), [environment](#), [Global](#), [Season of Creation](#)

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has joined leaders of other Christian churches in [a joint letter](#) encouraging participation in the Season of Creation. The annual celebration of prayer and action to protect the environment emerged from a proclamation by the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I in 1989. He called on Orthodox Christians to observe 1 September each year as a day of prayer for creation. Many churches across the world from different traditions began celebrating a Season of Creation between that date and 4 October 4 – the feast of St Francis of Assisi.



## Introducing Baby Grace to her Franciscan Family

From: Rev Mandy Wheatley - Provincial Chaplain

We have been praying for Martha and Graham Gee and they gave their permission to use this photo.

“It is a joy to introduce to you one of the smallest members in our Franciscan family, baby Grace Gee, daughter of Martha and Graham Gee.

This family who are living in Singapore share:

“We have been really uplifted by the prayers and messages of support we’ve been receiving.”

Please keep them in your hearts and thoughts.”

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## Anglican religious communities meet

By: Chris Roper wrote for TMA.

Representatives from 11 Anglican religious communities in Australia and New Zealand recently met at the Community of the Holy Name’s house in Cheltenham. The Advisory Council of Anglican Religious Life (ACARLA), an advisory body to the Australian bishops, meets annually to review matters of relevance to the life of the 13 religious communities in the Australian Church, and to support each other.

Some of the communities are long-established communities, such as the Sisters of the Church, the Society of St Francis and the Community of the Holy Name. Others are more recent, such as the Benedictines. Yet others are new expressions of the religious life in the Anglican Church, such as the Community of Saints Barnabas and Cecilia in South Australia.

How new expressions of religious life might be recognised was an item for discussion. New expressions are welcome but emerging communities also need to be genuine expressions of responses to the Gospel. As well, a number of people have embraced the single consecrated life, and seek recognition and support.

The role of communities’ Visitors was a topic for discussion. Most communities have a Visitor, who is a bishop with a particular role, generally both to support the community and its individual members, as well as ensure the community’s ongoing orthodoxy in faith and practice.

The implications for religious communities of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse were also discussed by the representatives. Professional standards are important in religious communities, as in the wider Church.

ACARLA will meet again early in 2019 at the new Holy Name Spirituality Centre in Cheltenham at the community house of the Community of the Holy Name.



**The Reverend  
Sally Buckley, tssf,  
Assistant Minister  
Provincial**

By: Rev Ted Witham

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Sally Buckley lives in Esperance, a beautiful town, but one of the most remote in Australia. When she became a Tertiary, Sally resolved to work hard to stay involved with the WA Region members, most of whom were based eight hours drive away in Perth.

For many years after her Novicing in 1989, Sally edited the WA Newsletter. This kept her in good contact with other Tertiaries. As the community in WA began to grow, an annual retreat around Francistide was proposed. The original plan was that this would be a traditional silent retreat. In the nicest way, Sally rebelled. She wanted to have at least some time to converse with her fellow-Tertiaries. The resulting amalgam of silent retreat and talking fellowship developed into WA's unique Convocation.

Sally also resolved to attend as many national events as she could. Chapter appointed her to be our third representative to IPTOC in 2005.

During these years, Sally started studies towards ordination as a priest. She was unlucky enough to have the goalposts moved several times, requiring now a Certificate of Theology, now another Certificate, now a degree, now extra meetings and seminars before she was made priest. During this process, Sally remained positive.

After her ordination in 1999, Sally was appointed first Assistant Priest, and then in 2003, Priest-in-charge of the Parish of Esperance, remaining in that role until 2014.

When I became Minister Provincial in 2006, I realised that I was not physically fit enough to undertake the international travel the role requires, so I asked Chapter to endorse her appointment as Assistant Minister Provincial. Sally ably represented all of us to IPTOC and one of the meetings of Ministers Provincial.

Sally always signs her letters as a 'little sister', and the Franciscan themes of littleness and humility are key parts of her spirituality. She believes that in St Francis she has found a holistic channel for her own spirituality, encompassing all of creation, its joys and sorrows, its wholeness and brokenness. Now Chapter has again appointed her as Assistant Provincial Minister, and her aim in the role is to build strong, healthy relationships within the Order and serve it the best she can, where and how she is asked to serve.



**Reverend  
Mandy Wheatley  
Provincial Chaplain**

By: Graeme & Kathy Dunn.

Mandy Wheatley was elected Regional Minister for the NSWB/ACT Region in August 2016.

She has done a stirring job as Regional Minister for the past 2 years, visiting and listening to those tertiaries right across the region, encouraging and supporting wherever and whenever needed plus encouraging enquirers who may be looking at a vocation in the Third Order. Her spirituality has been an inspiration to us all.

Mandy's role as Regional Minister has been a challenging one, given the length and breadth of the region which covers the ACT and Southern NSW, Goulburn to the north, Bathurst to the west and Wagga Wagga to the south west.

As well as her duties as Regional Minister, Mandy has spent a great deal of time in recent months in a Chaplaincy ministry at the Old Monastery, Stroud, north of Newcastle.

Mandy calls beautiful Narooma on the South Coast of NSW home but she spends much time on the road, up and down the mountain from home to the Tableland above. She has done this at all hours in the best and worst of weathers but has always done it joyfully and prayerfully.

We all in the NSWB/ACT Region will miss Mandy as she takes up her new role as Provincial Chaplain, but she goes with our blessing and the knowledge that she will do it well, with great commitment, great prayerfulness.

For those who may not be aware of what the Provincial Chaplain's role is, listed below are some of the duties:-

To lead in the pastoral care of members of the Third Order in our province.

- Receives reports from Regional Ministers
- Supports and encourages other pastoral officers – those appointed to Chapter, Newsletter Editor, Prayer Circle Contacts, Novice Counsellors, Area Fellowship Convenors.
- Follow up Provincial prayer requests.

# The Wounds of Discipleship

By: Rev Evan Pederick

So much ink has been spilled on the matter of St Francis' reception of the stigmata that it is sometimes referred to as *the Franciscan Question*. Despite early documentation in the 1226 pastoral letter of Brother Elias and the official biography by Thomas of Celano, doubts remain even for modern Franciscans - could there be a natural explanation, or could the early documents that testify to the stigmata be a pious fraud? If the stigmata are real, what do they mean? Could they have been the suppurating lesions of leprosy? Are they evidence of true mysticism or of madness?

During 1224, two years before the end of his life, Francis was much troubled by arguments and infighting about the future of the order he had founded. Celano records that in retreat on Mt La Verna Francis experienced a vision of a six-winged seraph affixed to a cross. Francis was filled with ecstasy at the gaze of the seraph but also with sorrow at the suffering of crucifixion. Meditating on the meaning of the vision, Francis noticed the marks of the nails beginning to appear on his own hands and feet, and an oblong scar on his right side (*I Celano II*, 94.1-95.4). The stigmata - a Greek word that can mean scars or brandings, as well as wounds - were accompanied with great joy as well as intense pain.

Without dismissing the arguments, Solanus Benfatti suggests in his book that the best answer to the mystery is to be found in Francis himself. While not overly literalistic, Francis always insisted that the spirit of the Biblical text was to be found in its plain meaning - and so centred his life around the effort to enter deeply and even physically into the life and passion of Christ. Francis's own writings reveal the consistent theme that those who follow Christ should expect that their own lives will mirror the poverty and suffering of Christ.

As we try to understand the meaning of the stigmata it may be helpful to observe that Jesus' earliest disciples also identify radically with his wounds. **The first** is Thomas - so often dismissed as the 'doubter' but actually the most courageous disciple who convinces the others to follow Jesus to Lazarus in Bethany despite the risks (Jn 11.16). The faithful follower Thomas wants only to be where Jesus is, refusing to believe the risen Jesus is fully present unless he puts his fingers in the marks of the nails in his hands and thrusts his hand into the spear-thrust in Jesus' side. Thomas's intense desire to touch the wounded and risen Christ is satisfied, and he makes the fullest confession of faith in the Gospel: 'my Lord and my God!' (Jn 20.26ff). For Thomas, the stigmata are simply the desire to be with Jesus.

**The second** is Paul, who acknowledges in his defensive letter to the Galatians the physical infirmity he suffered (and elsewhere recounts the beatings and imprisonments he has endured for the sake of the gospel), concluding 'I carry the marks (*Gk: stigmata*) of Jesus branded on my body' (Gal 4.13; 6.17, 2 Cor 11.23ff). Here, the stigmata are the (natural) scars of faithful living!

In a wonderful reflection on the wounds of St Francis, Robert Kiely considers Brother Leo who had accompanied Francis on retreat to La Verna and was the ultimate source of the tradition recounted by Celano.

Did Leo, who wanted to be with Francis so badly that he sometimes spied on the saint's devotions, witness the vision and the appearance of the stigmata? Leo is wonderfully human! He expresses doubts, is disobedient and inconsistent. His curiosity gets the better of his devotion. But the treasured handwritten parchment of blessing that Francis gives his companion on La Verna is for him 'a virtual or lesser stigmata, a painless note from God'.

Perhaps the simple point is that we are all different. As disciples of Jesus, we want a sign in our lives that he is present to us. As Franciscans, we want to follow Jesus like Francis does, seeing our Lord in the vulnerable and rejected, in the beauty and fragility of all creation. But as Leo - Everyman or Everywoman - doesn't need to copy his master in everything - neither do we. The wounds and blessings of our own discipleship are also holy.

## References

Benfatti, Solanus. *The Five Wounds of Saint Francis*. Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 2011.  
Kiely, Robert. "Further Considerations of the Holy Stigmata of St Francis: Where Was Brother Leo?" *Religion and the Arts* 3, no. 1 (1999): 20-40.

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## TRANSITUS: Celebrating the Passing of Francis and His Love of Mother Earth

Excerpt from: [www.franciscansforjustice.org/.../Transitus-Ecology](http://www.franciscansforjustice.org/.../Transitus-Ecology)

We are celebrating the Transitus, the "passing over" of St. Francis of Assisi from his earthly-based life into eternal life. This is also the 35th year anniversary of St. Francis being named the Patron Saint of Ecology. We will focus then on the death of Francis and his teaching us about the power of resurrection, while high-lighting his care for creation and finding Christ alive in every iota of each creature. Francis can be a model for us today on positively viewing death - and life! We are all familiar with the words Francis heard from the Cross at San Damiano, "Francis, go, rebuild my house." In their book titled *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth*, Franciscans Ilia Delio, Keith Warner, and Pamela Wood tell us regarding the word "ecology" that eco comes from the Greek word oikos. Oikos means "house," so actually the word "ecology" can be thought of as "study of the house." These authors add that for Francis ' the "house of God" is, first, the human person. The Word dwells in human flesh not in stone buildings. As the Word dwells in the human person, so too the same Word dwells in creation. The Word who is made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ is the same Word through whom all things are made. Fish, water, trees, birds, air, wind, fire—all are created through the Word of God. What Francis heard originally, "go, rebuild my house" became much larger for him; it became the entire oikos...'



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**Transitus of St Clare - Celebrated at St Philip's Anglican Church, Annerley.**

The ultimate focus of all Christian contemplation is always Jesus. Clare shows us that we can only know the meaning of our lives as human beings when we look at the life of Jesus

BLESSING (Taken from Clare's second letter to Agnes of Prague)

What you hold, may you always hold, What you do, may you always do and never abandon. But with swift pace, light step, unswerving feet, so that even your steps stir up no dust, may you go forward, securely, joyfully and swiftly, on the path to prudent happiness, not believing anything, not agreeing with anything that would dissuade you from this resolution or that would place a stumbling block for you on the way, so that you may offer your vows to the Most High in the pursuit of that perfection to which the Spirit of the Lord has called you. May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"I bless you, now while living and after my death, as much as I can and more than I can, with all the blessings which the Father of mercies has bestowed and continues to bestow upon his spiritual sons and daughters both in heaven and on earth. Always bear love to me, to your own souls and to all your sisters. Be careful always to observe what you have promised the Lord. The Lord be with you always; and may you be with him always and in every place: "Go forth without fear, for you will have a good escort for your journey. Go forth, for he who created you has sanctified you. He has protected you always as a mother does her child and has loved you with a tender love."

**Ecology and the Patron Saint**  
 Terry Gatfield tssf

The word ecology, simply the interactions among organisms and their environment, is now a household word for most people living in the developed world. There is open debate and a lot of action on many issues, such as global warming, forest deforestation, destruction of delicate reefs, mining, recycling, and damage to our delicate eco-systems. The list is long and not one of us is exempt from creating some negative footprint – it just depends on, how big! We are in this together and as fellow Franciscans we should have deep awareness and concern, perhaps more than most, for we are called to be stewards of God's planet earth. It has been estimated that there are about 10 million species on our planet and the Homo Sapiens (Latin for wise man!) are the only ones given the commission to be custodians and stewards on behalf of our creator. The founder of our order, St Francis, was a good listener in that regard and was credited with the title of being Patron Saint of Ecology by John Paul 2. We can learn so much from St Francis's writings, poetry and especially his example who, in recent years, has been termed the foremost and first 'deep ecologist'; that is one who has a rich understanding of the integrity of creation, a cosmic kinship and a deep connected passion for all forms of life. The term 'deep ecology' was coined by Arne Naess in 1972 – St Francis arrived at this much earlier, so much of his inspiration and wisdom can be gained by practising what he taught and demonstrated. We should be proud, even thrilled, to be waving his banner.

At the recent tssf conference in Brisbane, it was suggested that we should have in our quarterly tssf newsletter, on a regular basis, a special section devoted to ecology, but that this should not be an academic section but one where virtually anybody could comment on any issue or practices related to it. It may be very helpful and up building to include items related to idea adoptions and exercises that we have personally found to be environmentally friendly and hopefully helpful for us and for others. Ecological issues should be a part of everyone's interest and concern but, as Franciscans, we should have a very special voice. Gloria, our editor, is ready to obtain your contributions.

## “Imagining a new world!”

By: Rt Revd Keith Slater

The Provincial Conference and General Chapter brought together 80 people from across the Province. The theme for our Conference was “Imagining a new world” with particular attention to contemplative spirituality, social justice/action and creation and the environment. The Working Party which brought together this Conference was keen to encourage tertiaries throughout the Province to consider, plan and implement the Franciscan Principles in the places where they are located.

The Conference used Open Space methodology, facilitated by the Reverend Bronwyn Pagram, a trained facilitator and deacon from St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane. This methodology allows the raising of issues, areas of interest, questions, etc by the participants. Participants can then decide which of these they would like to explore through conversation with others who have a similar passion and interest.

Many such conversations took place in small groups over two days. The range of these conversations can be seen in the document entitled Book of Proceedings which has already been circulated to tertiaries.

**I would encourage individual tertiaries, as well as area fellowships, to take time to consider these conversations in the Book of Proceedings. In doing so you may be challenged to generate conversations and actions which will earth down, and give relevant expression to the Franciscan Principles in your part of the world.**

As a result of the energy of the Conference conversations a number of Actions were planned by individuals and groups of tertiaries:

Recommendation to take to Chapter report on novice formation and enquiry process

Attaining action to Institute for Welcoming

Spiritual Growth and care in later life

Ecology

Philippine Prayer Support Group

Intercessory prayer group for public issues

Letter to the PM re Uluru Statement of the Heart

“Pure Joy”

If you would like to be associated with any of these Actions, or learn more about what is planned please contact the Contact Person (as noted in the Book of Proceedings.)

Arising from the planned Actions, Provincial Chapter agreed:

### **A Welcoming Community**

*“The Order sets out, in the name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all. We accept as our second aim the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. We are pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind”. Principles Day 7.*

*“Members of the Third Order fight against all injustice, in the name of Christ in whom there can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for in him all are one. Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus”. Principles Day 8.*

The Third Order is an inclusive community where ALL who are called by God to follow Jesus in the Franciscan way are welcome to explore this vocation.

To write to the Prime Minister in support of the 2017 Uluru Statement.

A number of the Action groups:

**envisage** establishing Google groups to bring together interested persons across the Province. If you are interested in connecting with one of these Google group **keep** an eye out for further information.

**Bringing** into action our Franciscan Principles may well entail establishing a new group, or it might mean joining with another group already established in the community.

For example, many tertiaries have a heart for support and advocacy among refugees.

Following the Conference, one of our members, Charles Ringma, who belongs to ‘Love-Makes-A-Way’ made us aware of (and invited us to) a peaceful protest outside of the Immigration Department, Brisbane. They put up a table to collect non-perishable food and donations for refugees whose support has been seriously curtailed by present government policy.

Where to from here? I look forward to hearing of more creative and imaginative Actions that you, as an individual, or as an area fellowship, or as part of a community group engage in as a way of giving expression to your Franciscanism.

My thanks to the many people (the Working Party, the Hospitality Group and others from within and beyond the Order) who gave of their time and talents to bring together our recent Conference which challenges us into the future.

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## **Franciscan & Holy Days To Note 2018**

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

**“Readings and other material for worship and devotion are in the Manual - Section F’s**

## Merril Ruback My prayers for June and July come from the following Franciscans:

### Maureen (Arnold)

May our Lord give us the gift to see Him clearly and know His intentions for us.

Patience, while we wait on Him and as Christ commanded to “Love one another”.

Know that Hope that only comes through Him with His Peace which passes all understanding.

### Rev John Gibson

Blessings for Ascension Day on May 10th. In a number of our churches Ascension Day is celebrated.

In a gem of a devotional book that I have Canon Godfrey of the Diocese of Leicester, England in 1971 wrote:

“ Our little attempts to ask God for his help are caught up into the glory and majesty of our Ascended Lord who ever lives to intercede for us: our little prayers, our humble desires are blended into His great intercession, His life pulsating close to the heart of humanity in fulfilment of His promise never to leave us nor forsake us.”

**From: Simon of Hong Kong** - in his words - a prayer said over every person who is baptized. It is a prayer each of us should pray to open ourselves to the power of the Spirit in our lives:

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sin, and have raised us to the new life of grace in your Son Jesus Christ. Sustain us, O Lord, in the gifts of your Spirit: an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.

**Andrea (Maslin)** from Thomas Merton, “Thoughts in Solitude”

Abbey of Gethsemani

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.



## Conference

By: Dawn Punter

At our TSSF Conference in June we all gathered at Brookfield in Brisbane - such a joyous gathering of people who share the vision inspired by Sts Francis.

Our open discussions on topics suggested by various members gave us the opportunity to feel the support of likeminded Third Order members. We were able to air our opinions and inspire each other with positive dreams which all contributed to our belief in our ability to not just imagine a new world but to help create it.

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## The Parable of the Yeast in the Flour

By: Gabrielle McGee tssf

I don't think I'm much qualified to be writing this, due to an unfortunate experience I had with yeast as a young newly married bride 60 years ago.

Suffice to say the yeast won that battle in my kitchen and we have never engaged each other since. I have eaten quite a lot of bread though, and been grateful for the skill of more capable and experienced people.

However, reflecting on the parable in which Jesus used the illustration: (Matthew 13:33)

“The kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put in only a little in her flour, it permeated every part of her dough.”•

The idea of this teaching is about something seen and experienced in order to explain something that is unseen, and spiritual in nature.

My perception is that in our lives as we try to spread the eternal message of Jesus Christ, and we never know what a particular word or action of ours may stay with someone and gradually grow like the yeast makes the bread to rise until it is a different entity. It should encourage us to never give up on the work God wants us to do by word and action in spreading the wonderful news of Jesus Christ and his resurrection.

Material things are often paralleled in the same way as unseen or spiritual things work in the heavenly kingdom.

It illustrates to me that such an ordinary thing as yeast can have an extraordinary purpose, and in God's plan it is ordinary people like you and I who should have this purpose as well.



## Public Prayer (for The Franciscan)

By: Sandra Beck with Anne Wilson 16 June 2018

At the recent Provincial Conference for TSSF, Anne Wilson asked me if I would join her in enabling a short group discussion on public prayer. She was responding to something I had said the day before about a rally I had participated in to do with refugees and asylum seekers, in which participants were invited to break into groups for ten minutes group prayer. There were many Muslims at the rally and, as it was about sunset, they comfortably broke into groups and began their regular prayer. Some, who may have been non-believers or atheist, played with their phones, clothes, children or pets. I was in a, presumably, Christian group which included an Anglican canon and a Uniting minister. The group was uncomfortable. A couple of brief prayers were said, followed by an awkward silence. (I am totally comfortable about public prayer but did not want to dominate). I said I would sing the little hymn 'Let there be peace on earth,' and invited the group to join in. I sang it through once and then asked again, but no-one besides me knew the words (see below).

Anne Wilson and I walked to the door of the small discussion room. A message came into my head that one of us should BE the FACE of public prayer, ie DO what we were talking about. I grabbed a sheath of paper and a niko and wrote on one 'The FACE of public prayer (circling the word 'face').

I stood outside the room holding my banner. As people came past, I said "Hello, I'm the face of public prayer. Do you have something you think needs to be prayed about?" Following responses were dependent on the mood and responses of the other persons/s. In an actual situation there may or may not be a banner/placard. There might be a mix of silence, silent and/or some public prayer. The degree of engagement depends on the purpose and planning for the event. In Brisbane, *Love Makes a Way*, an activist group I belong to, usually uses a short service of relevant liturgy and perhaps a hymn, in a longer context of silent witness with an identified leader, the total being from half an hour to a couple of hours. Most prayerful events I am involved in are for an hour. If involved in a longer (up to 24 hour) vigil, I will always be praying whatever the context.

Some passers-by were reluctant to engage and sidled past, others made excuses such as, 'I have to do...' or 'I'm in a hurry to...'. When I felt it necessary I mumbled, 'I'm role playing'. One close friend made it clear she had no idea what I was doing. Several persons, however, did engage and when they did, I passed the sheath of papers to them and invited them to write down their topic for prayer. I thanked all who made any response as they departed and called 'God bless you.'

I stayed there for the duration of the session because that's what you do. If you commit to pray outside the cathedral, for example, for a certain time frame, that's what you do, you stand there regardless of weather, passer-by abuse, temptation, fear or comfort.

Inside the room, without backup, Anne felt the discussion was not going in the direction she had hoped for.

I will pray anywhere, anytime. I have great faith and belief in prayer (are they different?) I know that, of course, prayers sometimes seem to not be answered but I almost always can see God's hand in the way things turn out. From my personal point of view, my prime concern being presently about the inhumane and insanely costly Australian treatment of off-shore-detainees and asylum seekers and of some potential deportees, I pray and trust that, in God's good time, there will be lessons learnt for all concerned.

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### Reflection from Conference

By: Rev Keith Slater

#### The following was a reflection as I walked the Labyrinth during the tssf Conference in Brisbane:

"In the quiet this morning I was walking the labyrinth. As I began to walk in - towards the Centre - I recognised that God knows me well. I cannot go directly to the heart of God - because I will not be able to cope with God's holiness. I move towards the centre - the heart of God - not directly, but round and round, sometimes getting closer, sometimes further away. As I search to find my way it is the inexorable hospitality and invitation of God that draws me to the Centre - and in the image of Rublev's icon - God draws me to the open-sided table to share in the divine food. God welcomes me into that deep profound relationship where I know that I am loved (no matter what anyone else thinks).

But there is something about that profound relationship, in the Centre, I am held in the palm of God's hands - and in the labyrinth there is only one way out. When I begin the journey from the Centre I am no longer the same for the deep love of God that I have been drawn into goes with me and inspires me and energises me to share life with all whom I meet. Sent forth into the world in the location where I live - sent, but not alone.

And this does not happen once only. It is an ongoing never-ending rhythm into the heart of God and out into the world - almost like the eternal tide - and remarkably both happening at the same time."

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### Conference

By: Terry Gatfield

Recently I attended the tri-annual TSSF conference in Queensland. Just humble people were there, seeking to serve their Master in a delightful location. This was a conference with a difference, using open space technology and ground-upwards wisdom. I came away thrilled, not just through engaging with a new experience in how to run a deep and meaningful conference but on mixing with people who had come together to see how they could more effectively try and meet the needs of a troubled world. It was a most delightful, brilliant conference and splendidly organised and orchestrated. This conference was a rich blessing.



## The Power, Wisdom and Beauty of the Cross – La Verna

Excerpt from: “In the Footsteps of Francis and Clare”  
By: Roch Niemier. O.F.M.

La Verna is a mountain in the Tuscan region of central Italy. It is about eighty miles north of Assisi and is truly holy ground. In 1213 Count Orlando of Chiusi, a wealthy nobleman, donated the mountain to Francis and his brothers as a place suitable for prayer, penance, peace, rest and all things that might nourish the spirit.

On Francis’ first visit to La Verna in 1213 he received a revelation about the mountain that contributes to the mysticism of this holy place. The description is similar to Fortini’s account and relates well to Francis’ experience in September of 1224, when he received the wounds of Christ on his flesh.

The following comes from “the Second Consideration of the Stigmata’ found in *The Little Flowers of St Francis*.

A few days later St. Francis was standing beside that cell (that Orlando made for him), gazing at the form of the mountain and marveling at the great chasms and openings in the massive rocks. And he began to pray, and then it was revealed to him by God that those striking chasms had been made in a miraculous way at the hour of Christ’s Passion when, as the Gospel says, “the rock split.” And God wanted this to be manifested in a special way here on Mount Alverna in order to show that the Passion of Christ was to be renewed on that mountain in the soul of St. Francis by love and compassion and in his body by the imprinting of the Stigmata.

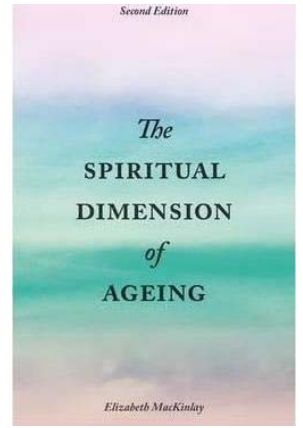
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## On September 8, Rise for Climate

**REAL CLIMATE  
LEADERSHIP RISES  
FROM THE  
GRASSROOTS UP.**

## The Spiritual Dimension of Ageing

Can be bought from Book Depository \$40.97  
By: Rev Elizabeth MacKinlay tssf



At the recent Provincial Conference, some discussion groups addressed the issues of Ageing and Spirituality.

This is the link for the international conference titled: Changing Cultures of Ageing and Spirituality <http://arts-ed.csu.edu.au/centres/accc/projects/8th-international-conference-on-ageing-and-spirituality>

The conference is sponsored by the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology (PaCT) at Charles Sturt University.

The forthcoming 8th international conference on Ageing and Spirituality, to be held in Canberra 27th to 30th October 2019. From the interest shown in Brisbane at the recent conference it seems that ageing and spirituality are important themes for TSSF folk.

As these dates are near to the dates (just a little early) that the first conference was held in Canberra almost 20 years ago, we are excited to be hosting this international conference again.

We have invited international speakers and have secured an excellent venue for the conference. We will be calling for abstracts to present papers at this conference soon, do think about what you may wish to submit to the committee for presentation. More details will be coming.

Please put this conference into your calendar and let others know. It will be a great opportunity to meet with others who work and study with older people, as well as for those of us who are also growing older, to hear of latest scholarship in this field and to engage in the dialogue. Please contact Elizabeth directly if you want to discuss this with her. [emackinlay@optusnet.com.au](mailto:emackinlay@optusnet.com.au)

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**We’re planning thousands of rallies in cities and towns around the world to demand our local leaders commit to building a fossil free world that puts people and justice before profits.**

No more stalling, no more delays: it’s time for a fast and fair transition to 100% renewable energy for all.

## Members of the Province of Asia-Pacific Chapter



Back row: Jill Gumbley (NSW A), Graham Miller (Qld A), Sandie Oakes (WA), Mandy Wheatley (NSW B/ACT), Roselind Ruwoldt (SA), Sandra Jackson (Assistant Prov. Minister), Ray Clifton (Qld B/Northern NSW), Glenys McCarrick (Prov. Treasurer), John Gibson (Prov. Chaplain), Godfrey Fryar (Prov. Minister), Sally Buckley (in-coming Assistant Prov. Minister)  
 Front row: Keith Slater (Assistant Qld B/N NSW), Colin Valentine (Vic/Tas), David White (Communications Coordinator) John Hebenton (Minister General), Wayne Philp (Prov. Secretary).

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**This prayer was written by:**

**Bishop Arthur Malcolm  
 (Australia's first indigenous  
 bishop)  
 and his non-indigenous wife,  
 Colleen.**

Creator God,  
 You made from one man all nations and determined where each should live.  
 We bring before you the indigenous people of Australia.  
 We acknowledge the history that has damaged the relationship between them and later arrivals to this land.  
 Thank you for the steps that have been taken on the journey towards reconciliation.  
 Deepen this process among us.  
 Guide national and community leaders to speak the truth in love, to seek justice with mercy and to care for those who are disadvantaged.  
 Strengthen indigenous church leaders to shepherd your flock faithfully, and strengthen all indigenous Christians to be salt and light in their communities and in the whole nation.  
 Give indigenous and non-indigenous believers grace to demonstrate the new family you are making in Christ out of people from every nation, tribe, language and people, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## PRISON MINISTRY

By: John Dendy, tssf

Being a part of Prison Ministries has continued to lead me to taking the Gospel to prisoners. It is above all else a very humbling experience; We are after all going from our world “of freedom” and associated temptations, to theirs of incarceration, as they prepare for release and a better life. Do we really understand their journey?

When you are on the inside (prison) what is on the outside (freedom) looks so much better! Until a prisoner returns to the outside and they realise that they had three meals a day, medical treatment in its entirety is taken care of, they had a roof over their head and a bed to sleep on.

But is it a better life they prepare for?

Remember on the outside that luxury comes at a cost. You have to earn the money to buy the food, to pay the medical bills, to pay the rent or mortgage. But as no-one will employ you, sometimes jail looks better!

As my journey has continued within the Jail system, I have met individuals who have been in and out of jail several times. Why I ask myself? They claim to have been rehabilitated. Would it not be better to be with family and friends on the outside?

As for myself, I have pondered various thoughts and opinions that are given to answer these questions.

We are after all humans, and prone to making mistakes, and there are consequences for these mistakes!

But, putting people in jail for non-payment of parking fees, I think is creating more problems than solving them, both socially, morally and practically!

People who are released into the “free” world from prison, are being released into what?

Generally, nobody wants them, give them the “time of day” or have anything to do with them and consequently they re-offend and are back within the jail system again!

Statistically, to keep a prisoner in jail in Australia costs tax payers approximately \$110,000 a year. We are the fourth highest, cost wise, in the world behind the Nordic countries! But are our offenders any better off?

Serious offenders such as murderers, rapists and paedophiles need to be incarcerated, but do minor offences need jail time? Someone that defaults on fines, or shoplifts for the first time, will learn more about crime in prison than on the street. If they are reoffending within two years, then the answer is NO! Would it not be a consideration for offenders instead of being put in jail, potentially making them habitual criminals, to spend the money rehabilitating them on the outside, promoting family values, a sense of community and ultimately respect?

We are about to undertake “Prisoners Journey” training using the Gospel of Mark as a foundation. It helps us to unpack the Markian sandwich to help prisoners get to know Jesus, our Saviour, better.



## Received from Rev Mandy Wheatley

By: Reverend Stephen Arulampalam

### Searching for their Shepherd

St.Mark 6:30-34, 53-56.

1. In our day to day lives we are searching for many things. Very specially today people are searching for good leaders, because they are tired of human leadership.

2. During the time of Jesus Christ people were fed up with their political and religious leaders.

3. They were ready to accept Jesus Christ as a Genuine shepherd or leader.

Because:

a) Jesus was concerned about people who were tired and needed to receive strength to continue their journey. - St.Mark 6: 30-34.

b) People looked to Jesus for spiritual and bodily healing. Especially inner healing. - St. Mark 6:53-56.

c) People accepted Jesus Christ as a leader, because he brought unity among the people through his death, thereby showing that unity is very costly - Eph 2:14-18..

d) People wanted to give a proper place for God.  
2 Samuel 7:1

5. Therefore people are crying and searching for leaders who;

a) Having the spirit of caring,

b) Having the mind of listening,

c) Having the heart of giving life for others,

d) Becoming powerless,

e) Action orientated leadership.

6. What type of leadership model are we exercising in our churches and society?

7. Are people looking for us? If we do not provide good leadership, God will hand over his sheep to someone else.

Note :- In Kuliappitiya there is a school for Deaf students.

Who can become a leader for this community?

Sometimes we would like to become a leader for the powerful people.

We do not want to become leader for the powerless people.

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***Praised be You, my Lord,  
through our Sister, Mother  
Earth, who sustains and  
governs us, producing varied  
fruits with coloured flowers  
and herbs.***

***- Francis of Assisi***

**The Franciscan Approach to Prayer**  
**Saint Francis' Style of Prayer – Franciscan Media**

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-francis-style-of-prayer>

Francis of Assisi, attained the heights of contemplation through a penetrating vision of creation. With a basic education in reading and writing, Francis came to prayer from a popular and lay experience.

For Franciscans, the journey to God is not linear but a journey inward, toward a new relationship with God in which God takes on flesh anew in one's life. The Good News of Jesus Christ, as the Franciscans understood it, is that we do not "go to God" as if God sat in the starry heavens awaiting our arrival; rather, God has "come to us" in the Incarnation.

"The eternal God has humbly bent down," Saint Bonaventure wrote, "and lifted the dust off our nature into unity with his own person" (Sermon II on the Nativity of the Lord). We move toward God because God has first moved toward us: This is the Franciscan path of prayer.

The journey of prayer for Franciscans is the discovery of God at the center of our lives. We pray not to acquire a relationship with God as though acquiring something that did not previously exist. Rather, we pray to disclose the image of God in which we are created, the God within us, that is, the one in whom we are created and in whom lies the seed of our identity.

We pray so as to discover what we already have—"the incomparable treasure hidden in the field of the world and of the human heart" (Clare of Assisi, Third Letter to Agnes of Prague). We pray not to "ascend" to God but to "give birth to God"—to allow the image in which we are created to become visible. We pray to bear Christ anew. In prayer, therefore, we discover what we already have—the potential for the fullness of life, and this life is the life of Christ. The rise of Franciscan evangelical life, a new path to salvation emerged in the quest for God.

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**The Community Obedience – Day  
Twenty Eight : Third Note – Joy**

Tertiaries, rejoicing in the Lord always, show in our lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. We remember that we follow the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was a friend to tax collectors and sinners and who sat at the tables of both the rich and the poor. We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God's world, its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean. We mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted and to bring joy into the lives of others. We carry within us an inner peace and happiness, which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source.

**Franciscan Blessing  
of Animals**

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. You inspired St Francis to call all animals his brothers and sisters. We ask you to bless all animals.

By the power of your love, enable them to live according to your plan. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures!

**Amen.**

Ralf (our Sub-Editor) is our family Cavoodle. He is 2 years old and he is great company.

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**Embracing**

Excerpt from: "The Three Fold Way of St Francis"

By: Murray Bodo

Who is the man behind these marvellous words? His name was *Francesco, Francis the son of Pietro Bernardone, the cloth merchant. He was an Assisian, a man of the Middle Ages, who lived from 1182 to 1226. And yet he continues to speak to something deep inside of us who are living in the third millennium. Why is that? Is it his joy, his devotion to Lady Poverty, his embracing the lepers, his love of nature and all created things? I believe the reason St. Francis continues to attract us today is his passionate love of God made manifest to him in Christ. This love led him to live the gospel and to follow in the footsteps of Christ so wholeheartedly that he became a living prayer. From this-love that is prayer-that-is-love flows everything we find attractive in the Little Poor Man of Assisi.*

How did this divine love affair begin? Francis was one day engaged in his father's cloth merchant trade when a poor man came into the shop begging alms for the love of God. Francis brushed him aside because he was absorbed in selling a piece of cloth. But when the beggar left the shop, Francis, who unlike his father was generous and open-handed by nature, was filled with remorse and ran from the shop looking for the man, promising himself that he would never again refuse an alms begged for the love of God.

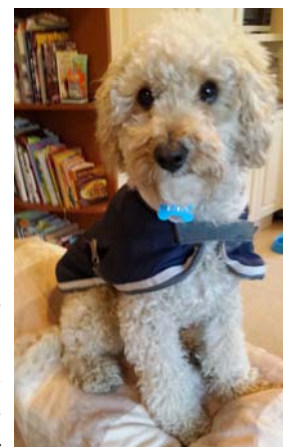
The incident caused Francis to experience a closeness to God. He became more reflective, and this meditative mood was reinforced shortly afterward when, as a newly recruited knight, Francis was taken prisoner in a skirmish between Assisi and its rival city of Perugia. He spent a year in prison and there he befriended a young nobleman the other prisoners shunned because he was offensive and uncouth. Again, Francis experienced, in the embrace of a rejected person, a closeness to God.

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**Advent Edition**

**Articles in by 20<sup>th</sup> November please.**

**Thanks for all your contributions for Stigmata Edition. Blessings, Gloria**



# Conference - Brisbane - Photos

