



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

FROM THE PROVINCIAL MINISTER

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We have recently had our house painted and have been blest by the excellent painters who have worked hard and have always been willing to go the extra mile. Our painters were Hazara refugees from Afghanistan. It was a joy to have them with us to hear them speaking their language and laughing together as they worked. They were also Muslims. I had good conversations with Zamenthe boss, who is married with two young daughters, and these talks were always illuminating and respectful, as we both spoke of the importance of faith and prayer and listened to each other.

On a recent Compass programme on the ABC there was a segment called 'Speed Dating for Muslims'. It wasn't at all what the name indicated but shared the story of an enterprising Muslim woman in Melbourne, who runs two restaurants and has a regular event where local Muslims are invited to come to one of her restaurants and sit with other Australians across the table. She provides an environment where both groups can ask whatever they want to know about the other. It runs, for a set time indicated by the ringing of a bell, and simple food, tea and coffee are provided for all.

It is inspirational bridge building work that is creating a new sense of community in the area.

Through these encounters, I was reminded of St Francis' meeting with the Sultan. In 'Franciscans Day by Day' I recently read a saying of Gene Knudsen Hoffman.

"An enemy is one whose story we have not heard".

Advent leads us to Christmas where the great and ultimate bridge building work of God is first revealed, as God humbles himself in Jesus' birth, and immediately begins to draw people together, a great work that will never end.

We are called to do what God does, and be where God is doing his work, wherever and with whom it is happening.

As the principles remind us, we are to set out *'in the name of Christ to break down barriers between people.'*

Peace be with you as we enter this holy season.

+Godfrey tssf.

Christmas

Reflection

By: Fr. Michael Perry, OFM



St. Francis composed one of his special "psalms" of the Office of the Passion for Christmas Vespers. The text expresses gladness and delight at the birth of Christ, but also recognizes the humility of the surroundings of the Babe of Bethlehem: "For the Most Holy Child has been given to us and has been born for us on the way and placed in a manger because he did not have a place in the inn."

Throughout his life, Francis was deeply moved by the fact that Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, chose to embrace the status of the "lesser ones." His consistent preference is to be among those considered "less than" others, sinners and Samaritans, Gentiles and tax collectors. His own closest followers come from modest backgrounds, including fishermen and a former tax collector. God manifests his unconditional love for his beloved children, irrespective of their worthiness, meeting them on the way towards a restored and dignified humanity.

From the most exalted status of divinity, the Word, the Beloved Son, humbles himself to receive, as Francis writes, the "flesh of our humanity and frailty" from the womb of the holy Virgin Mary. This choice, a completely free act of God's overflowing love, is that of becoming a creature among creatures, in order for the Son to lead all of them back to their source in the loving communion of the Trinity.



Pace e Bene

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

Important News from our Provincial Minister - Rt Rev Godfrey Fryar

Daily Obedience

For those who have not yet taken up following the Daily Obedience on your mobile phone, the link is tssf.org.au/daily-obedience.

Franciscan Aid

Franciscan Aid is the family charity of the Third Order and it works through Franciscans on the ground across the developing world to relieve poverty and advance education when their needs may not be covered by other agencies.

Needs of individuals and organisations are put forward by Franciscans of the First and Third Orders to the Trustees of Franciscan Aid. The effect of a grant is then monitored by the sponsoring Franciscan locally directly, or through a trusted source and by the trustees through reports they receive back.

Projects include School fees for children of families with AIDS in Zimbabwe, playground equipment for children in Bethlehem, scholarships for girls from poor families to attend Mowbray College in Kandy Sri Lanka, and aid for women undergoing fistula surgery in Uganda.

You can read more by going to:

tssf.org.uk/links/tssf-franciscan-aid-organisation

You can make donations through our Provincial account.

Please email Glenys our Treasurer to advise her when you transfer any money for Franciscan Aid and it will be forwarded to the Third Order in the UK who administer the fund.

Additions and Alterations to our Prayer Cycle.

RIP

Clement Bateman 9-11-18

New Novices

Vicki Crofton (QLD A)

John Noller (NSW A)

Simon Waters (SA)

New Korean Postulants

Please add to your prayers two more postulants from Korea who will with the other 6 noted in the Stigmata Newsletter, be admitted as novices in February. They are: Kwon Gu Ill (Veda), and Chae Chung Seok (Isaac).

Our Daily Obedience Day 25 – The Second Note

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." (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.

A Reflection for Advent – Francis and Advent

By: Revd Mandy Wheatley

Provincial Chaplain 25.09.18

Dear God, thank you for Francis who embodied this season of Advent. Help us to prepare for the coming of Christ this Christmas. As we read the Bible, meditate on Francis' example, and light a candle in the darkness, may excitement for Christ's coming burn in our hearts. Amen.

Francis of Assisi knew we didn't need to wait for God to love us by the cross and resurrection of Easter. He understood that when Jesus became flesh and took on our physical form, we were being offered an intimate relationship with our Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life. We and all of God's creation are loved so much that Jesus wanted to share this life with us, to know us, heal us, and make us fully human.

Richard Rohr describes it this way; "*We are in fact welcoming the Universal Christ, the Cosmic Christ, the Christ that is forever being born in the human soul and into history.*"

This is the mystery embraced by Francis at his public renunciation in the square outside the Bishop's house in Assisi, when he stripped himself of all that held him back from Jesus.

It was the insight Francis had when he set up the first crib at Greccio, understanding that God had come into the world to embrace us in our suffering and joy, our humanity and frailty.

This is Francis as he met the seraphim and said 'yes' to embracing the life and suffering of Jesus, just as Mary had done when she met the angel Gabriel, and as Jesus had done in Gethsemane.

He understood the humble, child-like trust needed to allow God's kingdom to indwell his life and be Christ-like in his actions, attitude and being. Francis embodied one who, every moment, pointed to Christ and Mary his mother— first as the babe in Bethlehem, subsequently in our hearts as believers and so at his second coming at the end of time.

And we thank You for your Son Himself will come again in the glory of his majesty... to say to all those who have known You and adored You and have served You in penance: 'Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom, which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world'. (The Earlier Rule by St Francis)

This is what Francis knew we were to prepare for; an eternal Advent – because, as Richard Rohr says; "*It is always Advent*". God is always revealing God-self through the physical world around us. In creation, God reveals the [Holy] Spirit of life embodied, celebrated, released in one way or another to give us hope, joy, revelation, meaning, belonging. This is the [Holy] Spirit of Christmas and why it is worth celebrating life, because God loves life and embraces it through the incarnation of Jesus in us.

**“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.”**

By: Rumi

MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE

By: Kent Nerburn

Article written by: John Blakemore

A couple of months back, Carol Hucker recommended Kent Nerburn’s book *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace* subtitled, *Living in the Spirit of the Prayer of St Francis*. Carol found the book a unique expression of Franciscan values as drawn from Nerburn’s life experience consisting of story and reflection on the words of the familiar prayer attributed to Francis of Assisi. Right off, I acknowledge that the earliest the prayer can be dated is 1912 and so any attribution to Francis is off the mark by some 700 years but that is of little matter for a prayer that has touched the hearts and brought so many into the sphere of Franciscan spirituality through its familiar words as well as the music of South African tertiary, Sebastian Temple.

The book speaks to our faith and to the challenge “... to sow faith where there is doubt. For even if we do not believe in our right to shape the faith of others, that does not mean that we cannot try to sow the seeds of faith that they can shape themselves. It is to their doubt we are called to minister not to their faith.”

Each chapter reflects on one line from the prayer and in the brief course of the book (just over 100 pages) Nerburn relates his personal stories with touching intimacy. My favourite finds Nerburn, the late night taxi driver, carrying an elderly woman to hospice, wherein the two of them tour the city visiting the places that held meaning for her and at dawn arriving at her final destination in this life. “Almost without thinking, I bent over and gave her a hug. She held on to me tightly. ‘You gave an old woman a little moment of joy,’ she said. ‘Thank you.’ Though I did not know at the time, I was doing the very thing that St Francis counseled. It was only after she spoke those poignant words that I began to understand.”

Story follows story, each tied to the prayer: Offering hope to the man who has accidentally killed a young child while driving. Holding the inner light for the daughter of a man who has drowned on a remote Mexican beach: “Francis’s prayer does not call us to *be* light but only to *give* light.” Living with Benedictine brothers as a sculptor in residence he comes to understand that the difference between spiritual conversion and spiritual formation is “the gradual opening of the heart through diligent and humble work...”

Peace, love, pardon, faith, hope, light and joy; they are all here in this slim volume pointing through the author and through Francis to our brother and Saviour Jesus.

Tuesday – Collect

God, you resist the proud and give grace to the humble: help us not to think proudly, but to serve you with the humility that pleases you, so we may walk in the steps of your servant Francis and receive the gift of your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen,

An Overview of QldB/NNSW Region

From: Ray Clifton/Keith Slater
(Regional Ministers)

The view of a satellite needs a wide-angle lens as it focuses upon Queensland B/ Northern New South Wales Region. The lens sweeps from Rockhampton in the north, and west to Roma, and to Grafton in the south – and all that that encompasses.

There are more than 80 tertiaries (professed and novices) making it the largest numerical Region in the Province.

Area Fellowships are well established in Grafton Diocese, Toowoomba and Bundaberg/Maryborough. There are also a number of isolated tertiaries.

Because of its geographical and numerical size, with Provincial Chapter’s permission and encouragement, appropriate structures for a growing Region have been emerging. In recent years a Leadership Team has been responsible for oversight of the life of the Region.

At the June 2018 Provincial Chapter the decision was made to appoint a second Regional Minister to enhance the emerging structure. As a result of this decision the Region is now moving to operate together in two sections – North and South. Ray Clifton is the Regional Minister for the North, and Keith Slater is Regional Minister for the South. There are about 40 tertiaries in each of these sections.

The primary Gatherings for the Brisbane tertiaries have been large occasions often meeting at St Francis’ College, Brisbane. With the new structures emerging, four new Area Fellowships will be established in Brisbane. It is recognised that small group interaction gives support and encouragement in living our Franciscan vocation. It is envisioned, along with the continuing larger Gatherings and the Area Fellowships, these will complement each other.

11/11/2018 - Speaking at a day of prayer, Richard Rohr says. “Advent is a time to focus expectations and anticipation on “the adult Christ, the cosmic Christ”, the Lord who challenges us to empty ourselves, and to surrender. This is the Jesus whom we invite to come into our hearts at Christmas and throughout our lives.



Then Will He Come

By: Revd Peter Llewellyn, tssf

Old men, the prophet says, will dream dreams; I dream of a future. I dream of a world that welcomes us all, a world that says to each child: Peace! Come in! – whatever your skin colour, gender, language, your abilities, you are as welcome as springtime, take your deserved place and live your life to the full. I dream in this broken world of the hope – seems so far away now – hope of all things made new, all things, all people, all souls.

Advent! Season of expectation, of hope against hope, of comings first and second – comings of the Christ, the renewer, redeemer, the giver of true life, coming with judgments like “Well done! Good and faithful servant, enter the joy of your Lord.” Judgments like, “Congratulations! To you, the meek, the ones who grieve, the hungry for goodness, those who know your own emptiness, yours is the Kingdom, forever and ever.” Amen; for Advent is truly the season of joy, when our poor lives are validated, when true worth is recognised, when failures are swept away with a hug and a smile.

When Jesus comes he always puts things right, mostly by putting them in proper perspective. All that talk of thrones and judgment seats is empire talk: his is the Mercy Seat, his throne is a kitchen stool. My hero Padre from World War I, Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, “Woodbine Willie” they called him in the trenches, says it all – enough anyway, in my opinion:

When through the whirl of wheels and engines humming
Patient in power for the sons of men
Peals like a trumpet promise of his coming
Who in the clouds is pledged to come again.

When through the night the furnace fires flaring
Loud with their tongues of flame like spurting blood.
Speak to the heart of love alive and daring
Sing of the boundless energy of God.

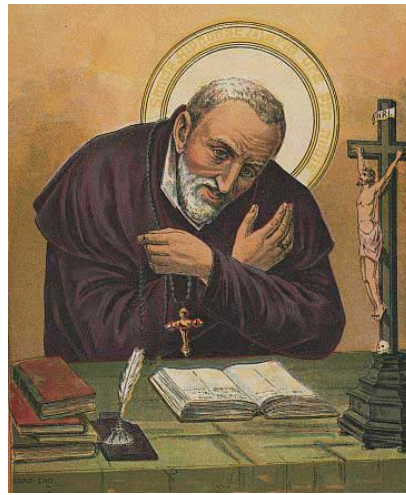
When in the depth the patient miner striving
Feels in his arms the vigour of the Lord
Strikes for a kingdom and his King’s arriving
Holding his pick, more splendid than the sword.

When on the sweat of labour and its sorrow
Toiling in twilight flickering and dim
Flames out the sunshine of the great tomorrow
When all the world looks up because of Him,

Then will He come with meekness for his glory,
God in a workman’s jacket as before
Living again the eternal gospel story,
Sweeping the shavings from his workshop floor.

Luke 2:8-20

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. “This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.



First Brother – Bernard of Quintavalle

By: Roch Niemier
OFM

Francis’ changed life began to be noticed in Assisi. Some young men were so moved that, like Francis, they felt inspired to leave all things behind and join him. The first of these

was a highly respected man by the name of Bernard of Quintavalle. Bernard was respected not only for his nobility and wealth, but above all for his learning. He was puzzled by the change in Francis, unable to understand what was taking place. Francis’ humility, firmness of purpose, joy of spirit, somehow gave Bernard the feeling that Francis had discovered a hidden treasure. So Bernard decided to look into the matter.

One evening he invited Francis to his home. It was probably early April of 1209. They sat down to dinner and Francis talked passionately of the new life he discovered in the Gospel, with all of his dreams and ideals coming alive in the service of a new Lord, Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

Listening and watching with penetrating eyes Bernard felt his heart opening. For a first time he caught a vision of a new kind of world, and his previous life suddenly seemed an abyss – empty, dark and meaningless. He considered this with astonishment.

Francis spent the whole night with him. Afterward Bernard said to him:

“If, for many years, someone holds on to the possessions, many or few, he has acquired from his lord, and no longer wishes to keep them, what is the better thing for him to do with them?” Blessed Francis answered that he must give back to the lord what was received from him. And lord Bernard said: “Then brother, I want to give away all my worldly goods for the love of my Lord who gave them to me, as it seems best to you. “The saint told him: “We will go to the church early in the morning and, through the book of the Gospels we will learn how the lord instructed his disciples.”

The Saint and the Sultan

[Some 800 years ago, St Francis met Egypt's Sultan – Watani](#) - 9/10/2017

en.wataninet.com > Coptic > Coptic Affairs

The year 2019 marks 800 years on the historic meeting between St Francis of Assisi and the Sultan of Egypt, al-Kamil Muhammad al-Ayyubi, in the midst of the conflict of the 13th century Fifth Crusade.

Fr Milad Shehata, head of the Franciscan Cultural Centre for Coptic Studies, told Watani that a mega celebration would be held in Cairo to honour the occasion. It started on 2 October 2017, and lasts throughout a year and half, until 2019, he said. "The celebration is designed to highlight the most prominent figures of Muslim-Christian dialogue over time, St Francis being the epic symbol of that dialogue," Fr Milad noted.

Celebrating the historic meeting

The celebration took off with an event on 2 October at the Nile hall of the Catholic Centre of Cinema in the Church of St Joseph in Cairo. A seminar will next be held jointly by the Franciscan monks in Cairo and Cairo University, which will feature a lecture by Muhammad al-Khashd, President of Cairo University, and another by Franciscan Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, representative of the Vatican for Eastern Churches and head of Franciscan Order in Rome.

St Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) was a man of peace. He was the privileged son of a wealthy Italian merchant but gave up his possessions and adopted a life of peace, poverty, compassion and nonviolence.

In a moment of conversion, while praying on his knees before a crucifix in 1205, Jesus spoke to him from the image on the cross: "Francis! go, repair my house which is falling completely to ruin." Francis saw this as a request to transform the entire Christian Church. He was reborn as a peacemaker and was convinced that God wanted him to bring the world a message of peace.

He adopted the signature greeting "May the Lord give you peace" and constantly opposed warfare, arrogance and the violent culture of his day.

Continue reading, go to: above website

Queensland B/NNSW Region

We had our last Community meeting morning for 2018, on Saturday 24th November at St Francis College.

It was well represented and enjoyed by all. We shared the Eucharist at the Chapel and we had renewals of Professions and Fay Neale from Biloela was professed.

We celebrated the feast of St Elizabeth of Hungary. Reverend Graham Dorman gave a sermon on her life. She dedicated her life and worked tirelessly for helping the marginalised, the sick and the poor.

After the Eucharist, we had community sharing over morning tea and lots of chatter and later we had a reflection.

SOME THOUGHTS ON OUR LORD'S INCARNATION

By: Tania Harvey, tssf, NSW B

Question: What do tinsel halos and head dresses made of tea towels have to do with St Francis?

Answer: The annual event of nativity displays, pageants and plays that happen in schools and God's churches all over Christendom. St Francis is attributed to having created the first display of our Lord's birth in Bethlehem. He did this in the town of Greccio, Italy back in 1223.

I have always enjoyed putting my nativity figures out during Advent and adding the Baby Jesus on Christmas day. My three children took turns to do this. We made our nativity sets with all kinds of materials including clay, paper, and felt. St Boneventure wrote that "St Francis had a special devotion to the Christ Child." St Francis said, "I want to do something that will recall the memory of that child who was born in Bethlehem." St Francis used a life sized crib, a real ox and donkey in a cave and encouraged the townsfolk to celebrate Mass viewing this scene.

St Boneventure wrote "It was done in all solemnity lest he be accused of lightness or novelty." This is an attitude I encourage in small children coming to a nativity scene for the first time. While the Christmas season is full of excitement and celebration, being able to be quiet and reflective for a moment and look upon the humble scene of God made into a human child. Then perhaps the first real sense of wonder about Jesus is added to a child's growing faith. St Francis "stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety."

I believe St Francis has created through the nativity a beautiful form of meditation on humility, simplicity and poverty of the Christ Child; some things to contemplate this season of Christmas. I close with a prayer:

Dear God , May we have eyes to see Your incarnation afresh. May we have voices to encourage others to do likewise. May we have hearts open to celebrate our Christ Child, together with St Francis and all the saints this Christmas. Amen.



From left: Rt Rev Keith Slater, (middle) Fay Neale, (right) Gloria Malouf-Marsh

Assisi - A City of Contrasts

By: Rev. John Marsh tssf
Resident Chaplain Nov/Dec 2017

Should you arrive in Assisi in the early evening for the first time you will be overawed by the beauty of the basilica bathed in light. It seems to have completeness and a unity. And yet this first impression hides a multitude of contrasts.

This clean well-maintained ancient hill town of Assisi is so unlike the other hill town of Spello, not far around the base of Mount Subasio, which seems to have an air of benign neglect. The well grouted stones of the buildings, the carefully cared for roads and footpaths, the lovingly maintained churches, are all testimony to the expenditure of a great deal of effort and money.

This mediaeval town captures, in a rather antiseptic way, something of the town Francis must have grown up in. Compare this with its sister down on the valley of Spoleto, Santa Maria degli Angeli, a modern Italian town of the plains.

The most striking contrast, though, is in the thousands of people who come to pay homage, in some form or other, to the memory of Francis. Some are old and infirm, struggling along the streets of the town. Especially in the summer time, in school holidays, they compete with groups of students, some obviously out to have a good time, others dressed in uniforms suggesting some religious connection lead by young enthusiastic priests or nuns. Some are dressed in good solid hiking gear, exhausted after a long walk up the mountain. Others are dressed fashionably just off the tourist bus, fitting in Assisi on the way to Rome or Florence. But they too are tired; bus travel can be exhausting in its own way. All are looking forward to that cup of espresso or perhaps a cool gelato.

Some are pilgrims, some tourists. Superficially they seem to be easily distinguishable. Pilgrims may have a Tau cross round their necks. Tourists rush down the entrance steps to the crypt of St. Francis, spend five minutes, and then rush to exit, they have so much to see in such a short time!

We all have mixed motives for the things we do, though, don't we. The tourists we may be tempted to dismiss so disparagingly, may have an abiding faith in Jesus and the memory of St Francis.

This is their first, and perhaps their last, visit to Italy and they do the best they can with the limited time at their disposal.

Assisi is a shopper's paradise. The range is enormous. Food, knickknacks, religious artefacts, toy crossbows, expensive clothes, you name it they've got it. The contrast between the sacred and profane is overwhelming. The contrast between tacky religious ornaments and beautiful icons is equally evident. Though before being too snobby, I'm reminded of C.S Lewis' insightful comment that he had long learnt not to confuse good taste and virtue.

Despite the contrasts, Assisi, for me is very much a place of prayer. There are many churches, most celebrating the Eucharist with incredible frequency, all well attended, on any day of the week.

As an Anglican tertiary, attending the Eucharist (the Mass) is very reassuring. The shape of their liturgy is almost identical to our own. Extreme Protestants would be surprised to learn how "Bible based" the Mass is, and as for preaching they would leave Southern Baptists for dead, at least in the length of their sermons.

As an Anglican and a Franciscan tertiary, Assisi confirms the best in both these traditions. It is a place of reconciliation and acceptance. Even our own St. Leonard's is borrowed, by grace and favour, from the Catholic diocese. We, the expat Anglican community of Assisi have much to give thanks for.



The Three Kings

By: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Three Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

Three caskets they bore on their saddle-bows,
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond-trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,
Through the dusk of the night, over hill and dell,
And sometimes they nodded with beard on breast,
And sometimes talked, as they paused to rest,
With the people they met at some wayside well.

"Of the child that is born," said Baltasar,
"Good people, I pray you, tell us the news;
For we in the East have seen his star,
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,
To find and worship the King of the Jews."

From: The Three Kings by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow |
Poetry Foundation

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57830/the-three-kings>

I'd like to share a few things about myself!

By: Sandie Oakes - tssf

This hymn has been one of my great favourites since I was 6 years old. It is by Percy Dearmer (1867 – 1936) and is set to a tune from the 16th century which was published in Pies Cantiones (1582) – Arranged by Gustav Holst. It is from my “Prayers & Hymns for Junior Schools” from when I lived in Bedfordshire in the South of England.

God is love, His the care, Tending each, everywhere.
God is love, all is there! Jesus came to show him,
That mankind might know Him!

Refrain

Sing aloud, loud, loud! Sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth! God is beauty! Praise Him!

None can see God above; We can share life and love;
Thus may we Godward move, Seek him in creation,
Holding every nation. Refrain

Jesus lived on the earth, Life and hope brought to birth
And affirmed human worth, For He came to save us
By the truth He gave us. Refrain

To our Lord praise we sing, Light and life, friend and
King,
Coming down, love to bring, Pattern for our duty,
Showing God in beauty. Refrain

This year, Roger and I celebrated 40 years of marriage.
Thanks be to God. We met in the middle of Cheshire, in the
North West of England, when we were both 22, at English Country
Dancing in a village hall.

A very special book I have, is called Psalms for Praying –
An Invitation to Wholeness – by Nan C. Merrill. I bought it at a
bookstall at a Centering Prayer Day of Renewal, at Schoenstatt,
Constantia in Cape Town, in 2006. We lived in the Northern
Cape on the edge of the Kalahari Desert the first year we were in
South Africa, before moving down to the Western Cape. Most
of that time we lived about 50 km east of Cape Town.

I love the gentleness of the way Nan has translated the
Psalms, and reading one of her Psalms, or part of one, is a good
way for me to enter silence, in contemplative prayer, preferably
whilst sitting in the garden, with the wind chimes playing in the
breeze.

One of my favourites is Psalm 131

Most gracious Presence, let me not be arrogant, nor boast
of my virtuous deeds;
Let me not seek fame or set my heart on the riches of the world.
Help me to calm and quiet my soul, like a child quieted at its
mother's breast; Like a child that is quieted, be so my soul.
I shall hope in You, O Breath of my breath, from this time forth
and forevermore.
Amen.

Sometimes I paint... and I know that God is encouraging
me to express myself in this way much more often than I do.



Listening to the Place

The sanctuary of San Damiano - Recalling the Soul
Excerpt from: Edizioni Porziuncola Publication

It's a simple place, not one crowded by the faithful and
fine art.

Hidden on the slopes beneath Assisi in a charmingly
naturalistic setting and intentionally sheltered from the flow of
organised tourism, it is a call to the soul that brings one here.

Well over a thousand years old, yet all the same passed
on to us through the restructuring that firstly Francis, then Clare
and later the friars did here, it is a privileged place of the highest
quality of evangelical spirituality, both the cradle and a reliquary
of Franciscan origins.

God revealed himself here. The spirit still makes its
presence felt. From the shadows the faces of Francis and Clare
appear; the Canticle of the Creatures oozes out from the walls.

These simple places speak in a silence which you can listen
to. Here Francis' conversion to Christ and his radical response
to that call took place. Here the love of Clare was consumed in
living out the gospel as Mary had done. Both of them, through
lives which were Christ-like, Marian, church centred and very
human – one almost another Christ the almost another Mary –
became evangelically speaking a restored House/Church in line
with the command from the Crucifix.

*For God is indeed a wonderful Father,
who longs to pour out His mercy upon
us, and whose majesty is so
great that He can transform
us from deep within*

- Teresa of Avila



About Angligreen

By: Ann Ellis

I have been a Friend of Angligreen since 2008. I would like to share with you our mission and Vision.

Angligreen

Angligreen was officially established as the environment group for the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane at Synod in June 2007. This was the result of a groundwork movement particularly led by the Rev'd. Miriam Nyrene and Don Gibson.

Vision

Our vision is that all members of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane value and respect the whole of God's creation as a principal part of their Christian spirituality.

Mission

Our mission is to support prayerfully the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane in its commitment to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth by providing leadership, fellowship, education, outreach, advocacy and practical action, seeking the support of the traditional custodians of this land.

We resolve to fulfil our mission by

Bringing prayers and actions concerning environmental care, sustainability and ecojustice to the forefront of our worship, study and reflection. Also other areas covered are Public events, developments, publications and sources of information on the environment across the Diocese.

Providing opportunities throughout the Diocese for enjoyable experiences of nature and the outdoors, as well as environmental education for all ages about issues related to sustainability.

Encouraging members of the Diocese to become better informed, speak out and act on environmental matters, both within diocesan decision-making forums and in the wider community.

Encouraging parishes and other Diocesan agencies to commit to the seven R's of environmental care...

REVERENCE for all of Creation.

REFUSE to use resources unnecessarily.

REDUCE consumption and waste.

REUSE resources where appropriate.

RECYCLE materials where possible.

REPAIR rather than throwing away.

RESTORE habitat and ecosystems.

Supporting parishes and other diocesan agencies in carrying out an environmental audit to assess the impact of their present activities and any proposed activities on the environment.

Assisting parishes and other diocesan agencies in reducing their environmental footprint.

I hope your interest has been livened! I am happy to answer any queries ann.ellis@optunet.com.au and also point you to our website: angligreen.org.au/

Face book page: <https://www.facebook.com/Angligreen/> and Wednesday Weekly:

Newsletter and enquiries: info@angligreen.org.au

Behind the Barcode

Taken from: WCTU Aust Ltd. Vol.122 No 3, August – October 2017

From: Fay Neale

How much do we research the items we buy? Do we favour "Made in Australia" with the new logos telling us it is either Australian Grown, Produce of Australia, Australian made and owned, Packed in Australia from 50% Australian ingredients and so on. It seems the categories are never ending. Then there are the goods and garments made overseas. With free trade to many nations, imports are part of life. But should some labels read: "Forced to work exhausting hours in unhealthy conditions"? or "Cotton gathered by children for this garment". We need to say "No" to anything for sale which is made by modern slaves. Women and girls are forced to work long hours in unhealthy conditions for minimum pay.

Baptist World Aid has produced an *Ethical Fashion Guide – Your Guide to the Story behind the Barcode* with a rating for many companies on their goods for sale. (2017 *Ethical Fashion Report – behindthebarcode.org.au*).

Amnesty International's report on *Child Labour – not in my trolley* (2017), lists concerns for children as young as eight years old working in palm oil plantations, particularly in Indonesia, doing back-breaking dangerous work with little pay and no access to education. We sometimes give little thought to who is harvesting palm oil found in toothpaste, some ice creams, soaps and many other products we place in our trolleys.

Stop the Traffik is a global movement fighting to prevent, to protect on behalf of persecuted people around the world and has been in Australia more than 10 years. They seek to support everything from traffic-free chocolates to fashion. They launched a report in 2011 asking the Australian government to introduce legislation which required companies to report on what they were doing to end human trafficking in their supply chains. Last year the Government announced an inquiry into whether Australia should have a "Modern Slavery" Act requiring such reporting. (stopthetraffik.com.au)

Fairtrade is well known through their retail products and outlets and is about stable prices, decent working conditions and the empowerment of farmers and workers around the world. Look for the sign on coffee and chocolate particularly. (fairtrade.com.au)

Men lose all the material things they leave behind them in this world, but they carry with them the reward of their charity and the alms they give. For these, they will receive from the Lord the reward and recompense they deserve.

- Francis of Assisi



Privilege, ecology and getting naked

By: Terry Gatfield, tssf

It was so good to hear from fellow travellers on their interest in Ecology and Franciscan Spirituality at our last conference in Brisbane. I would like to add to our ongoing discussion in respect to our 21st century 'privilege' which has planted us in a country for which we share in the ownership, wealth and control of something like the top 5% of the world's worth. Unfortunately the privileged position foisted on us (and so easily welcomed and embraced) often creates a blindness in our lives in so many ways. It is a sobering privilege but one which often stands in juxtaposition to the founder of our order – St Francis.

St Francis removed himself from earthly privilege on the night following the laying of a charge by his father of stealing and selling his cloth, horse and dray as a means to finance the rebuilding of San Damiano. He did this in response to hearing the call of God *to rebuild his house*. Francis confessed his guilt in a quasi-legal court setting, before Bishop Guido. On his confession, St Francis proceeded to strip naked, returning his clothes and the money gained from the sale of the goods to his father, saying: *No longer do I call you father. From now on I have only one Father who is in heaven*. He walked out of the court on that bleak winter's day, naked and without privilege – no money, earthly estate and naked, disowning his earthly father with family privileges both cancelled and abandoned.

From that point on St Francis' biographers frequently mention his continually taking off his clothes, giving them to beggars, lepers and those in need. However, to view this passion exclusively as an external act of charity often shields us from knowing the deeper relationship he now enjoyed with the whole of creation. With that incredible symbolic act of taking off his robes and garments of privilege and embracing sister poverty his world expanded – expanded cosmologically and christologically.

Francis could now converse and have a deep relationship with the birds, talk to brother wolf, engage in conversation with the sun, moon, wind, clouds, water, fire, fruits, herbs and flowers, so often calling them 'brothers and sisters'. Creation, God's Creation, now not only had meaning but, more importantly, engendered within him a love, passion, oneness of the Trinity and he was a part of that oneness.

St Francis abandoning earthly privilege opened the door to the depth and wonders of creation – and a new set of privileges emerged that connected, love, care and concern.

My take-home message is for us, who are so often soaked in privileges of wealth, security and abundance, for we can easily be disengaged from the deeper and perhaps richer dimensions of the wonders, loveliness and beauty of the mystery of our ecology. We should be on a journey of continually falling in love with creation and hopefully becoming more effective stewards. We have the scriptures, we have the role model of St Francis and we have the voice of God's creation.

St Francis has been awarded by the Roman Catholic Church the honorary title of Patron Saint of Ecology. Most appropriate. But I would like to suggest that he should also be awarded the title of Patron Saint of Nudity – let's consider getting naked with him.

From: Merrill Ruback – Sept/Oct

From Roselind (Ruwooldt) -

Venerable Bede,

O Christ, our Morning Star, Splendour of Light Eternal, shining with glory of the rainbow, come and waken us from the greyness of our apathy, and renew in us your gift of hope. Amen.

Sandra Jackson

The title: 'Was Gott tut, dass ist wohlgetan'.
(What God doth, is well done).

Here are the words of the final Chorale:

*What God doth is well done;
to this I shall be constant.
Though I be cast onto the rough road
by affliction,
death and misery,
God shall uphold me
just like a father
in His arms;
that is why I let Him prevail.*



Gabrielle (McGee)

Living God, the fountain of life,
to a humanity parched with thirst
You offer the living water that springs from the Rock,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ:
stir up within your people the gift of your Spirit,
that we may profess our faith with freshness
and announce with joy the wonder of your love.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ
who lives and reigns with you forever
Amen

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

During this Advent Season, may we all unite in prayer, love and peace for the world, as we await the birth of our Saviour. May we find it in our hearts to be generous of spirit, give us reason to live in hope, that light will overrule darkness, liberate our thoughts from fears and prejudices, and that we may never feel alone.

Thanks to all those who have contributed articles for this Edition. Please feel free to share your stories when the Spirit calls, and thanks for your support in your readiness to assist me, this year.

The approximate date deadline for the Easter Edition is the 4th April 2019. I look forward to hearing from you.

email: gloria@radiantpathways.com.au

Contact: 07 33710265 (mob) 0412400374

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas, and keep safe.



Pace e bene, Gloria

“My Inner Child”

By: Ann Ellis

“Suffer the little children to come unto me.....”

I was so angry frustrated and hurt. Why? Nobody was listening to me and my message! wake up, stop and take stock of what is happening, climate change is real, we need to change our ways is what I wanted to cry out.

This is how I was feeling a few months ago. But even to me my reaction seemed over the top.

I went to see my Spiritual Director and she told me what in my heart I already knew. “stop trying to save the world!” She sent me home with a Mantra “Jesus, I trust in you” and instructions to put down all that was not necessary for the time being. Good advice.

Shortly after, while in prayer, I saw this little girl in my “mind’s eye”. She was me when I was 4 years old. She looked so sad, so isolated, so alone. My heart went out to her and I began to cry. I told her I loved her. She came again while I was praying, my heart filled with compassion. Again I told her I loved her and this time I also hugged her and again I cried.

My Rector told me to stay with the child, ask her some questions. This I did.

A new meaning was born out of Jesus words “suffer the little children to come unto me..”

I was able to assure this child I would always love her and together we explored her loneliness, her feeling of being isolated and overlooked and her cry, “where was Jesus”. We resolved so much together in Jesus’ presence. Now this child is laughing and playing in my “mind’s eye”, and I feel that I have literally come back down to earth, to humility. There was transformation and integration of childhood hurts and adult compassion bringing wholeness through Christ.

Franciscan & Holy Days To Note 2018

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

2019

January	16	The First Franciscan Martyrs
February	9	Anglican Franciscan Pioneers
March	6	Ash Wednesday
April	19	Good Friday
April	21	Easter Sunday
April	11	Brother Geoffrey SSF
May	29	Jack Winslow
June	13	Anthony of Padua

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

Welcome the Fragile Beginnings

By: Marie-France Becker

From: “Fifteen Days of Prayer with St Clare of Assisi”

Jesus’ incarnation remains the way chosen by God to tell us the value that we have in his eyes and thus, to reveal to us our own grandeur. From the crib to the cross, the *Most High* espouses our fragile humanity and rejoins it beyond its incapacity to love.

The adventure of salvation begins in Mary’s body: *May you cling to His most sweet mother who gave birth to a Son Whom the heavens could not contain, and yet she carried Him in the little cloister of her holy womb and held Him on her virginal lap* (3Lag 18-19). The good fortune of poverty is the first feature of the image that Clare contemplates in the mirror. It is that which appears, first of all, and touches her gaze and her heart.

In Jesus, the poverty shines with a luminous radiance. It receives from him its true sense, unveiling the depths of its mystery. He comes to us deprived and vulnerable to be able to reveal its treasure. The true good, capable of leading us to happiness, is hidden in the riches of the relation to the other and the others. It blossoms in gratitude, in confident dependence and in free self-effacement before Him. Our hesitations, our wanderings and our failures can never reduce us to deny the love that this poor God came *so that you might become rich though his poverty* (2Cor 8:9).

The fragility of our uncertain steps contains the seed of a noted blessedness from the lord and of which we grasp, through intermittence, some glittering:

Reflection Questions

Gazing on the crucifix of Saint Damiano nourished the prayer of Clare. What are your sources where you quench your thirst for God? What is God’s revelation to you in these sources? How can the birth of Jesus be inscribed in your daily life?

[A Franciscan Benediction - The Epistle epistle.us/inspiration/franciscanbenediction.html](http://epistle.us/inspiration/franciscanbenediction.html)

May God bless us with *discomfort* at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with *anger* at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with *tears* to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough *foolishness* to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” **Micah 6:8**

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Finding God in the Poor and Marginalized

Taken from "Advent and Christmas Wisdom from St Francis of Assisi"

Compiled by: John V. Kruse

They (the brothers) must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and powerless, the sick and lepers, and the beggars by the wayside. - St Francis of Assisi, The Earlier Rule

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness in soul and body....St Francis of Assisi "The Testament"

Prayer

Lord Jesus, from the moment of your birth, you identified yourself with the poor and marginalized. It is among the outcasts, despised, and downtrodden that we encounter you today. May we have a special concern for the poor and a desire to reach out to those who are often excluded in our society; help us to see your face in theirs.

We become what we love, and who we love shapes what we become. If we love things, we become a thing. If we love nothing, we become nothing. Imitation is not a literal mimicking of Christ, rather it means becoming the image of the beloved, an image disclosed through transformation. This means we are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others.

- Clare of Assisi



The Origins of the Christmas Crib

From the Life of St. Francis (Legenda Maior)

By St. Bonaventure

It happened in the third year before his death that St. Francis decided, in order to arouse devotion, to celebrate at Greccio with the greatest possible solemnity the memory of the birth of the Child Jesus. So that this would not be considered a type of novelty, he petitioned for and obtained permission from the Supreme Pontiff.

He had a crib prepared, hay carried in and an ox and an ass led to the place. The friars are summoned, the people come, the forest resounds with their voices and that venerable night is rendered brilliant and solemn by a multitude of bright lights and by resonant and harmonious hymns of praise.

The man of God stands before the crib, filled with affection, bathed in tears and overflowing with joy. A solemn Mass is celebrated over the crib, with Francis as deacon chanting the holy Gospel. Then he preaches to the people standing about concerning the birth of the poor King, whom, when he wished to name him, he called in his tender love, the Child of Bethlehem.

A certain virtuous and truthful knight, Sir John of Greccio, who had abandoned worldly military activity out of love of Christ and had become an intimate friend of the man of God, claimed that he saw a beautiful little boy asleep in the crib and that the blessed father Francis embraced it in both of his arms and seemed to wake it from sleep.

Not only does the holiness of the witness make credible this vision of the devout knight, but also the truth it expresses proves its validity and the subsequent miracles confirm it. For Francis's example when considered by the world is capable of arousing the hearts of those who are sluggish in the faith of Christ.

The hay from the crib was kept by the people and miraculously cured sick animals and drove away different kinds of pestilence. Thus God glorified his servant in every way and demonstrated the efficacy of his holy prayer by the evident signs of wonderful miracles



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