

The Province of Asia-Pacific



AUSTRALIA, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA, KOREA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SINGAPORE & SRI LANKA

NEWSLETTER

Easter

Edition

From the Provincial Minister

Reverend Mandy Wheatley



Dear Franciscan family,

As Lent is a time for repentance and preparation for the Easter mysteries, so Easter is a time for hope and renewal. Being in the Third Order, our efforts to detach ourselves from the bonds of sin through the three pillars of Lent: (Prayer, Almsgiving, and

Fasting), remind us of Jesus' words on Day 1 in our Community Obedience; "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" - "Whoever serves me must follow me." (John 12.24-26)

Preparation for Easter is similar to the three Aims of our Order; to make Christ known, to spread his peace and justice by a spirit of love and harmony and to live simply with the song of our Notes; Humility, Love and Joy.

From a 14th century manuscript called "Fioretti di San Francesco" or the "The Little Flowers of St. Francis", we hear a story about how Francis spent one Lent completely alone, on a small island in the Lake of Perugia, eating nothing but a half loaf of bread for the whole 40 days.¹ Miracles blossomed after his observance of fasting and isolation.

"People came to this island, building houses and living there, until finally a town grew up, along with a community house for the friars, and all in this place where Saint Francis observed Lent felt great devotion for him and reverence." From this we learn that there is often a great harvest of fruit that comes from setting ourselves apart for God.

We may not be called to spend Lent in solitude on an island in a literal sense, however, we are certainly called to a greater focus on our relationship with Christ in his suffering and resurrection, and a detachment from our earthly treasures. We are drawn by a desire to grow in love of the Lord and in that desire comes miracles of flourishing and growth.

Francis is an Easter saint; the wounds of Christ's Passion that he bore visibly confirmed Francis' passage through death to life. He shows us what can happen when the grace of Easter becomes effective in a Christian's life. He teaches us that every earthly suffering holds the seed of resurrection. Yet Francis' immersion in the mysteries of the Passion did not make him sad or somber. Rather, the sorrows of the Lord opened Francis to a deeper, truer joy.

Let this be the intent of our daily prayers for our brothers and sisters in our Community Obedience and in all the affairs of this difficult and troubled world. May we desire to maintain a spirit of gratitude and joyful hope like Francis.

I pray the Lord may give each of us delight and peace as we journey through Lenten Penitence to Easter joy. May we become more aware of our Saviour's unconditional love for each of us and all God's creatures, through his passion, death and resurrection and may you be blessed by this sweet prayer from the Cloistered Poor Clare Nuns of Belleville, Illinois USA.

"St. Francis of Assisi,

Man of the Gospel,

Icon of the Crucified,

Easter Saint, pray for us!"²

(Endnotes)

<https://franciscanmissionaries.com/st-francis-spent-40-days-island/>

<https://www.poorclares-belleville.info/Fruits/Easter2.htm>

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ did fast forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to thy Spirit; and, as thou knowest our weakness, so may we know thy power to save; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.



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

Paralympian, doctor and deacon: The extraordinary story of Gemma Dashwood — a champion swimmer mixing medicine and faith

By Jessica van Vonderen
Posted Sunday 6th December 2020

Paralympic gold medallist Gemma Dashwood has taken on many roles. She has always wanted to be a doctor. Even as a child, she was no stranger to hospitals. Shortly after her birth in Canberra, she got an infection in her hip. It was septic arthritis which destroyed the bone and the joint. “So I’ve never really known anything else than to have a limp and to have chronic pain and to have multiple operations,” she said.

Gemma had her final hip replacement in 2004. “Many years on crutches and walking sticks and learning how to walk.” When walking was difficult, she could swim. Really swim. “I just started basically for therapy reasons and got a little carried away and before I knew it, was actually competing at national and international level.” She started swimming as a form of therapy and went on to represent Australia. Dr Dashwood went on to win gold, silver and bronze medals at two Paralympic Games — in Atlanta in 1996 and Sydney in 2000. “It was a lot of hard work. 4:00am starts, six days a week. It was tough,” she said. “But you know, I wouldn’t have missed it for the world.” And still, medicine beckoned. A degree in speech pathology was her way in. Masters in medical ethics and health law followed. She’s now an intensive care registrar, working in the Ipswich and Wesley hospitals, in a year when the coronavirus pandemic emerged.

We had no idea what this COVID was all about. “We had no idea how it was going to play out. We really had to learn as we went. “Not only could we get sick, but we could make our families sick as well and that was a really confronting thought,” Dr Dashwood said. She is now an intensive care registrar, working in the Ipswich and Wesley hospitals.

God Thirsts

Taken from: “Fifteen Days of Prayer with St Clare of Assisi”
By: Marie-France Becker

Until now, Clare asks us to gaze. And here, she invites us to enter in dialogue. Brusquely, the *mirror placed on the wood of the cross* comes to life. A moan is raised in the middle of the silence. From the mouth of Jesus on the cross, Clare receives a lamentation of a humiliated Jerusalem, *Look and see: is any sorrow like the sorrow inflicted on me (Lam 1:12)*. Sorrow that Saint John will translate as a last cry; *I am thirsty* (Jn19:28). On the cross, Jesus knows an unfathomable solitude. The solitude of a surrendered love only encounters the silence of escape, incomprehension and refusal. Jesus’ dying cry unveils his infinite desire and his thirst of communion with the creature. He wounds the heart of Clare, allowing her to accept insofar as she is able his inexpressible love.

Jesus’ passion lives day and night in Clare. Here is a prayer which she confides to Ermentrude of Bruges. “*From the depths of your being, love God and Jesus, His Son, who was crucified for us sinners, and never let the thought of him leave your mind. Meditate constantly on the mysteries of the cross and the agonies of His mother standing at the foot of the cross (LER 11-12)*.”



The calling

It was during the pandemic, that her other big passion came to the fore — her faith. “I’ve

always been involved with the church. My mum was born and bred an Anglican. My dad was born and bred an atheist. “It wasn’t until a few years ago though in Queensland when I started to get the calling that there might be something more there for me.” Gemma has completed a degree in Theology and was ordained a Deacon on Saturday. She got a degree in Theology and this weekend she was ordained a Deacon. Reverend Dashwood believes faith and medicine complement each other.

“Doctors actually don’t know it all,” she said laughing. “There’s a lot we can’t explain or we don’t know the answers to and particularly in intensive care and particularly if you’re dealing with end-of-life matters.

Her mum Dorothy (L) reunited with her daughter at her ordination after not seeing each other since Christmas last year. “That’s where medicine and theology overlap.



“You can sit in a space and say to someone, ‘there is no science to help you anymore’, but I can sit here and talk to you. “I can sit here and share your fears.”

At the Wesley hospital, Gemma broadcasts prayers into the patients’ rooms during the coronavirus lockdowns. “To reassure people that there were still prayers going on, there was still a routine, there was still a connection with human thought and love.”

Her boss at the Wesley, Professor Bala Venkatesh, said Dr Dashwood’s dual role was “unique”. “Providing hope and compassion and care and being non-judgemental. “I think they are very important qualifications for both a doctor and a priest,” Professor Venkatesh said.

Christian Discipleship Exploring Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

By: John Gibson tssf NSW B/ACT Region.

“We are called to serve God in the spirit of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience in everyday life (rather than in a literal acceptance of these principles as in the vows of the Brothers and Sisters of the First and Second Orders). The Rule of the Third Order is intended to enable the duties and conditions of daily living to be carried out in this spirit”; so we read and reflect on this, on Day 4 each month.

I recently read *“For Peace & for Good. A History of the European Province of the Community of St Francis”* by Helen Stanton written in 2017. It was written with the full cooperation of the Community. Helen is a theologian, writer, retreat leader and spiritual director. (Where I quote from the book I have identified it by FP&FG and the page number). It is a good read giving an overview of the history, the responses over time and life stories of the sisters. But what really grabbed me was the insights for us of what poverty, chastity and obedience means for us today and going forward. I found it refreshing and focussed. What follows are just some thoughts. It is not a detailed study.

But first a return to basics. I found it was good to be reminded that: “As a baptized person like a Franciscan sister: *I am called to live a life in solidarity with Christ, who is known in the poor and marginalized.* As a baptized person, like a Franciscan sister, *I am called to live a life of accountability, a listening for the word of God, knowing it comes to me in every situation, and in living its call.* As a baptized person, *I am called to live my life as an integrated whole, undivided, ‘to construct her life or his life, in its totality, in a particular way for the sake of the Reign of God.’* (FP&FG page 162.)

When I was in England in the nineteen seventies I watched on television a well-known bishop on the point of retirement being interviewed by his local TV station. The interviewer asked him, “Bishop what was the highlight for you. Your ordination as a priest or consecration as a bishop?” The bishop replied, “Neither. The most important sacrament for me was my baptism and he quoted the date.

It is an important reminder that at our baptism we are “made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven” (A Catechism page 815 A Prayer Book for Australia.)

“At the heart of the Franciscan life is a commitment to poverty. In the life of St Francis this commitment was so compelling that he personified poverty, calling her ‘the Lady’ or ‘Lady Poverty.’—St Francis’ times are often characterized by the indictment of rich and corrupt clerics, whose concerns are portrayed as far from ‘simplicity,’ let alone the gospel call to follow Jesus in the way of the poor.” (FP&FG parts of pages 50) While St Francis may have used romantic language he certainly ‘rolled his sleeves up’ and was a ‘doer’ in very practical ways.

However, the beginning and end of all that we do is the offering up of our daily life in prayer. *“This integrative prayer is closely related to a life of poverty in the spirit of Sisters Francis and Clare and of Matthew 25:31-46. As the late Sister Jenny Tee said to me when I was discussing some teaching I had done with student Rabbis at Leo Baeck College, ‘What did you say about where we encounter Jesus?’ I’d have said: “In other people, especially the vulnerable.”* (FP&FG page 49.) *The Eucharist – “This is my body broken, for you, this is my life blood offered for you, which has been, and is, and shall be, transformed, and transforming, into the stuff of God’s kingdom”.* (FP&FG page 155)

A wonderful example of this was the story I heard when attending a Focalare meeting when I lived in Griffith NSW. Two businessmen who belonged to the Focalare Movement were seeking to fill a position in their company. After prayer and discussion they decided that they would offer the position to the person who they felt was in most need. They employed a man who had a speech impediment, had been unemployed the longest of all the applicants and had a family to maintain. It turned the standards of this world upside down.

Poverty for us is explained as *To live simply* (Day 10 – *The Third Aim*).

All of us I think are involved either in projects together as Franciscans or in our parishes/communities to bring assistance and help alleviate poverty; also importantly, ways and means to help lift people out of poverty. Also supporting organizations beyond our own borders by our interest, prayers, and financial support.

On pages 64 and 65 of FP&FG it is pointed out that we need to avoid the misconceptions that *“charity is a relationship between rich and poor where through philanthropic agencies the wealthy simply foster a subservient class. Helping others informally is a deep-rooted tradition. The preferential option for the poor may be exercised in a number of ways, including conviviality, sharing the life of poor people as their friends.”*

This is illustrated in the story of St Francis who was invited to dinner by the nobleman Matteo de’ Rossi. When Francis arrived at the palace where Matteo lived he saw the servants giving food to the beggars at the gate. Francis stopped and decided to stay and share their food. Matteo on seeing this sat down with Francis and said to him, “If you can’t eat with me, Brother Francis, then I must eat with you.” Matteo became a faithful follower of Francis in the Order.

In my own parish next to our church there were flats owned by the ACT government which were occupied by a number of vulnerable people. Those flats have since been demolished and are being replaced by up-market flats and units. But that is another story. I used to often yarn to three of the men who sat on the seats by our pond and took it on themselves to look after the fish. When the flats were demolished they were moved to other accommodation well away from us. They certainly took literally their care for the fish because the fish moved with them!

To live simply is an ongoing challenge for us and monthly in our readings from Days 10 to 12 we have the opportunity to reflect and review.

In the next Edition of our Newsletter, God willing, I will jot down a few thoughts on Chastity.

Some Symbols of Lent and Easter

Taken from: www.franciscanpenancelibrary.com

Lent and Easter have many symbols whose meanings can lead to a deeper appreciation of this Holy Season.

Ashes were used in the Old Testament to symbolize humility, death, and repentance. On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, priests sign the faithful with ashes on their foreheads, with the traditional words, “Remember that you are dust and unto dust you will return

Penance means conversion, the turning aside from the things of earth and the turning toward the things of God. Penance is what Lent is all about! What is keeping you from turning completely to the Lord? Food? Money? Possessions? A certain person etcetera? Ask the Lord to show you the wall between you and His arms. Then make plans to begin repentance.

Prayer is necessary for the spiritual life all year through but especially during Lent. Prayer keeps us in touch with the Lord and opens our space for His direction.. Prayer gives us confidence that the Lord is in charge. LORD, teach me how to pray better, to pray with greater trust, to pray for Your Will to be done, not mine.

Fasting is a traditional Lenten practice and a prayer of the body that pulls us away from our own desires and self-satisfaction while making us more receptive to God’s grace and inspirations. When we are hungry, we don’t just think about food. We also think about life. And when we get our minds off ourselves, we are able to hear the tiny whisper of God. Before He began His public ministry.

Almsgiving is a traditional practice during Lent. Almsgiving refers to giving money or goods to the needy. Jesus assumed that people would give alms because he told them to do it in secret. He did not say, “IF you give alms.” Rather He said, “WHEN you give alms.” St. Paul admonishes us to be a cheerful giver. St. James tells us that our faith is proved by our almsgiving to the needy.

Bread - Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life.” We receive our Lord under the appearance of bread in the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist as He broke bread with the apostles. Easter Bread is a tradition in many European cultures.

Wine was used at the Passover meal. At the Last Supper, Jesus blessed the wine and said, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’ (Matthew 26:27-29) ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’ (Luke 22:20) At Holy Mass, the faithful receive the Blood of Christ under the appearance of wine. Making wine from grapes is a long process. Ripe grapes are crushed and the juice fermented. In life, trials that crush us and drain our life from us. Over time, with God’s grace, time heals and transforms what was crushed into a new, life giving vision.

Amen.

Foot Washing: On Holy Thursday night, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples to show them that they must humble themselves and serve others. He wanted to leave them His example as well as the Eucharist before going to His Passion and death. Foot washing was the job of slaves and servants, not of lords and masters. Jesus demonstrated that those who serve are truly the greatest as they imitate God Who serves us, His creatures. LORD, grant me the humility to serve others even if, in worldly terms, they are socially or politically or morally “below” me. I am the least of Your servants, Lord. Grant me the humility to see myself as I truly am and to live in humble service to others. Amen.

The empty tomb indicates Christ’s resurrection from the dead. It also indicates our resurrection. Christ’s transformed body shows us that our body, too, will be transformed at the resurrection. His perfected body bore the wounds of the crucifixion, just as our perfected bodies will bear our wounds that we suffered in life, but they will be transformed and made glorious and become instruments of healing for ourselves and for others.



Reading from the Principles of the Third Order (Object, cont’d)

In the example of his own sacrifice, Jesus reveals the secret of bearing fruit. In surrendering himself to death, he becomes the source of new life. Lifted from the earth on the cross, he draws all people to himself. Clinging to life causes life to decay; the life that is freely given is eternal..

* * * * *

Prayer by Dr. Roger Hurding

From: Franciscan Media

Jesus, I thank you for your love so strong. May that love flow through me to others.
May I be patient when change comes slowly.
May I be kind when life seems harsh. May I be gentle when others feel bruised.
May I be humble when things go well. May I be peaceful when anger rises within.
May I rejoice when the truth is discovered.
Love never fails, but I do.
May I hope when things seem hopeless.
May I persevere when the way is hard.
Amen.

RECONCILED TO RECONCILE

By: Reverend Daniel Hobbs tssf



As we embark upon the journey of resurrection, the Season of Easter, we are reminded that all creation is *reconciled to reconcile*. Few have held this conviction and sought to live it in practice with greater faith than our brother Francis. Francis had eyes to see creation as God sees creation - one, whole, diverse ecosystem into which life is breathed by God, whose eternal completeness was revealed by the Son and whose very being of love is held by the Spirit. All who seek in this life to emulate Jesus the Christ have, once and for all, been reconciled to God by the cross. In fact, I suggest we always have been and Christ's cross simply revealed that cosmic reality to us. The restoration of our union with God, places before each of us the call to the "ministry of reconciliation" -• (2 Cor. 5:18). As we have been eternally blessed by the peace and hope offered by our covenant with God, we each seek to bless others with this gift. In so doing, we play our part as members of the Body of Christ, inching this world ever closer to mirroring the world to come. "We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way" - (St Francis). Our world today yearns for compassionate, committed agents of peace, of shalom, of oneness. COVID-19 has revealed just how important this ministry is in our time. God's vision for God's world in this regard was never more beautifully cast than that captured in 1 John. In this brief piece of scripture, the author puts to word the vision into which God calls all Christians. This is a world of restored communion between Creator and Creation, revealing a new order, a resurrected wholeness, a single union of abiding love and, in so doing, invites each of us to reveal this wholeness to all the world.

Alongside the quote above from Francis, I am frequently drawn to this verse of 1 Timothy, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus" (2.5). This vision calls me into the messy and conflicted terrain of reconciliation, mediation, facilitation. Humanity, in exercising the freewill gifted it by God, sometimes chooses its own path. This choice may distance humanity from God (i.e. from love) but as the resurrection demonstrates, we can never truly be separated from God. God seeks only to love humanity in eternal relationship and at a cellular level we have always been, we are and we remain one with God and with each other. This transformative revelation inspired St Paul to write:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:" that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting peoples' sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us"• (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

This ministry remains ours today - in the footsteps of Francis, inspired by the vision of the cross. We are those who are reconciled to reconcile.

* * * * *

Maundy Thursday - (foot washing)

Taken from: [en.wikipedia.org > wiki > Maundy_\(foot_washing\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maundy_(foot_washing))

Maundy (from the Vulgate of John 13:34 *mandatum* meaning "command"),[1] or the Washing of the Feet, or *Pedelavium*,[2] is a religious rite observed by various Christian denominations. The name is taken from the first few Latin words sung at the ceremony of the washing of the feet, "*Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos*" ("I give you a new commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you") (John 13:34), and from the Latin form of the commandment of Christ that we should imitate His loving humility in the washing of the feet (John 13:14–17). The term *mandatum* (maundy), therefore, was applied to the rite of foot-washing on this day of the Christian Holy Week called Maundy Thursday.

John 13:1–17 recounts Jesus' performance of this act. In verses 13:14–17, He instructs His disciples:

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

— John 13:14–17 (NKJV)



A Post-Corona Virus “World” and the Desert Fathers and Mothers

By: Charles Ringma, tssf

Even though the Corona Virus is still spreading in many countries, in other countries there is speculation about what a post-covid-19 “world” might look like. The main discussions are around economic, education, health and technology issues. And clearly, while there is always the possibility that valiant attempts will be made to recapture “business as usual,” it is highly likely that changes will occur in each of these areas. What is an open question is whether the changes will be first order (fine-tuning within an accepted paradigm) or second order (change in terms of a significant paradigm-shift).

My focus here is whether there will be significant changes in the churches.

In exploring some possibilities in that domain, I first need to make an important *theological* point, namely, that the church is both a divine and a sociological entity. This is somewhat akin to Christology where we make the claim that Jesus is both “Son” of God and “Son” of Man.

What is important about this formulation in relation to the church is that the divine dimension of the church remains the same (though it may be understood and articulated differently), while the sociological dimension may significantly change. However, these two areas should not be separated. Just as in Christology, when we speak of Christ, we speak of the *one* person, so we should speak of the church as *one* entity. In other words, these two dimensions belong together. Martin Luther called these two dimensions God’s Right Hand and God’s Left Hand. The sociological or institutional dimension being the Left Hand.

In the light of this, I wish to make the point that during this period of the Corona Virus the functional reality of church as sociological entity may well have been weakened due to a lack of normal church services. And the three dimensions of church, identified by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as Word, Sacrament and *Fellowship*, may well have been weakened, despite the use of virtual church.

But what is unchanging despite the above changes? Simply put, the faith, spiritual practices, ethics, life-style choices and service and witness of the church’s members. (And this includes all those who live this way and no longer attend church). In this period of social isolation, some, maybe many, may have discovered (or recovered) a new personal spiritual resilience.

The heart of Christianity is people impacted by the gospel through the Spirit and seeking to live in the way of Christ and in service to the neighbour. And for most, the gathered church is important as a source of sustenance and on-going formation, as well as combined missional activity.

If none of the above is too unacceptable, then I can come to my main point. Is it possible that in the post-covid-19 “world” we may see a renewed emphasis on *fellowship* in the churches, *or* we may see a re-vitalised laity who seek to be like the Desert Fathers and Mothers, *or* we may see both, *or* something else may emerge?

Why like the Desert Fathers and Mothers, you may ask? These Christians went into the desert to pray for a renewed church and world. They were a lay movement. They were concerned that the church of their day had become too culturally captive. And they believed that through prayer and ascetic practices a revitalised church could come into being. As such, these desert Christians were the forebears of Monasticism which played such an important part in the further development of Christianity.

So, some core questions are: can we expect a more institutionalised church in a post-covid-19 “world” with the sociological dimension of church becoming more dominant, *or* can we expect a greater emphasis in our churches on community and a shared life, *or* can expect to see a renewed and more resilient laity who will take on a far greater role in shaping the Christianity of the future. Rather than seeing the church as a restaurant or a petrol station to meet their weekly spiritual needs, they begin to see the role they can play in the purposes of the Reign of God.

The core beginnings of these purposes have to do with being birthed anew by the gospel and the Spirit. To embrace a cruciform spirituality. To live a “desert” asceticism. And to become again people of prayer.

Martin Luther wrote: “prayer is the chief work of the Christian.”¹ Prayer not only renews our life with God and blesses the church, but, importantly according to Luther: prayer “can preserve the world.”²

As Christians we are called to live before God and the neighbour. The contemplation of God calls us also to see the world with new eyes and see its healing and renewal in the abundant grace of God.

So, what do you think? What are you wrestling with and thinking about in this time where our more regular routines are on hold? What are you hoping for on the other side of this pandemic? What is “brewing” inside of you? And how are you *investing* in this time reflection, thinking and wrestling so that things may more fully swim into view?

Directed Retreat

Held at Santa Teresa Spirituality

centre,

267 Wellington St.,

Ormiston, Qld

9am Monday 19th April to

9am Saturday 24th April 2021-02-24

Facilitator: Marie Thompson

Pacecommunity.org.au

\$1,200.00

RSVP by 2nd April

Register: admin@pacecommunity.org.au

It is a compassionate God who encircles

Our humanity with love and yeans

To bring us home to our True self.



Principle 1: The Object of Christa Prema Seva Sangha

Taken from: The Manual of The Third Order of The Society of St Francis Page F9

Jesus the Master speaks: Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there shall also by servants be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

The Master sets before us in the example of his own sacrifice the secret of fruit-bearing. He surrenders himself to death, and lo! He becomes the source of new life to myriads.. Lifted up from the earth in sacrifice, he draws unto him, all those multitudes of which the Greeks, whose coming kindled his vision, are the foretaste and prophecy. The life that is cherished perishes; the life that is renounced is eternal.

The law of renunciation and sacrifice, which is the law of the Master's own life and fruit-bearing, he lays also upon his servants, bidding them follow him in the same path. To those who thus follow he promises the ineffable reward of union with himself and acceptance by the Father.

The object, therefore, of Christa Prema Seva Sangha – the Society of the Ministry of the Love of Christ – is to build up a body of men and women, who accepting Christ as their Lord and Master, will seek to follow him in the way of renunciation and sacrifice as an act of witness and for the fruitful service and uplift of his brethren in the world.

Excerpt Taken from: “The Tree of Life”

By: Bonaventure – Page 46
Sent to me from Sandra Beck

Oh, if only I could find this book
Whose origin is eternal,
Whose essence is incorruptible,
Whose knowledge is life,
Whose script is indelible,
Whose study is desirable,
Whose teaching is easy,
Whose knowledge is sweet,
Whose depth is inscrutable,
Whose depth is ineffable,
Yet all are a single word!
Truly, whoever finds this book
Will find life and will draw salvation
From the Lord.

Boundaries and Rules

By: Reverend Heydon Mckellar

An aspect of human life in 2020 has been the dynamic rules that have restricted every corner of our society. While most people were compliant with these ‘new’ rules, there were those who reacted adversely to these introduced rules to reduce the impact of the pandemic virus, COVID-19.

Some of the rules weren’t new, they were simply basic hygiene that most of us would have learnt as young children. Keeping your hands clean, covering yourself when coughing or sneezing, and isolating oneself when you feel unwell are all long accepted social hygiene.

So then why has there been such unrest about the rules and the restrictions? Has our individual sense of freedom become more important than its effect on the society in which we live? Where is our faith in this situation? Can the way we wear our mask be an expression of our relationship with God?

The questioning of these rules appears to be based in a distrust in those who are the messengers and how the information is interpreted. Our modern society has become very selective in the manner we accept and trust mathematic and scientific processes used to make decisions about what rules need to be in place. Most of the time the real source of the objection is a perceived loss of personal freedom. A loss of personal power over self.

Through out the Gospel narratives, there has been a running argument between the Sadducees and the Pharisees over who has control of; and who has the ‘correct’ interpretation of what God desires of God’s people. Both of these groups saw Jesus as a threat to their understanding of faith, their hold on power. This source of conflict has been ever present in the Christian Church over the last 2000 years. It has created some of the darkest events in Christian history.

But Jesus gave all believers boundaries for living. In giving the Two Great Commandments, Jesus gave his disciples and followers a code for living. A code that cannot be twisted or distorted to suit one’s own desires and freedoms. Loving God with every part of oneself leaves no ‘wiggle room’ to make it conditional. God is to be a priority in our lives as we are in God’s. Loving our neighbours as we love ourselves clearly identifies the boundaries God gives us to live. It calls us to love the One who has given us our neighbours and ourselves – God.

Sometimes it is hard to love our neighbours because they can be really be annoying or absolutely horrid! But that does not let us off the hook, we are to love them regardless of whether that love is positively received. When we are told to wear a mask as a COVID-19 safety measure, wearing a mask the way we know we should is an act of love for self and neighbour.

Loving our neighbours is also a matter of respect. Respect of God, self and neighbour. Rules are imposed by external authorities. But boundaries can be put in place by oneself and can be an act of love. A love that encourages others to turn rules into boundaries of hope.

*All shall be well, and all shall be well,
and all manner of thing shall be well.
Julian of Norwich (1342-1416).*

The joy of singing in worship.

By: Godfrey Fryar tssf.

In recent times I have become one of the small team of Cantors in the Franciscan Parish of St Philip's Annerley in Brisbane. I have always enjoyed singing through 48 years of ordained ministry, teaching new hymns and songs and singing the preface in the Eucharist, but being Cantor is quite different. The Cantor leads all of the congregational singing as well as the responsorial psalm for each Sunday and the Gospel Alleluia, and all of this is done using the microphone, and herein is the rub for me.



I have been in parishes where the lead singer or singers at the front have dominated the music through microphones. Having been a priest for so many years, and long ago being taught never to draw attention to yourself in worship, as Cantor I feel I have been drawn into being one of those microphone 'groovers'! The problem for me lies in where I should look as I sing. Should I gaze at the congregation, or look above their heads or close my eyes? My particular quandary area is the congregational sung parts of the Eucharist, the Sanctus, Benedictus, Acclamations and Agnus Dei.

These are calls to worship for us all rather than moments for me to encourage the congregation to sing up! My solution is to sing standing at the microphone side on as I look towards the altar! Congregational singing for Christians grew out of our Jewish roots where psalms continue to enrich Sabbath worship and from this foundation singing has expanded well beyond the Psalter.

Interestingly, while Christianity and Judaism sing in worship, the other monotheistic religion, Islam does not usually have singing in mosque worship. God has given all of us the ability to sing, and we sing in worship to help us praise God, to help us pray, to proclaim truth, to deepen our devotion, and to encourage each other.

Singing at worship however is not meant to be a performance, as our singing should be directed towards God. This incidentally is why we don't applaud a choir in worship after they have sung something particularly well. This raises interesting questions when in some places everyone claps together after having sung a particular song at Church. What is happening here?

We know that St Francis loved to sing and as he was dying, he was singing. Brother Elias, by reputation a somewhat pompous member of the brotherhood, came close to Francis as he lay on the ground, and told the saint that his singing was too loud and that his lack of restraint at such a solemn time of dying might detract from the respect in which the community might be held, and embarrass the order. Elias suggested to Francis that he should die with more Christian dignity! "Please excuse me Brother Elias," St Francis said, "but I feel so much joy in my heart that I really can't help myself, so I must sing", and Francis died singing.

When we sing, we make ourselves vulnerable. There is always the possibility that we will go out of tune or not hit the high notes but as John Bell has said, "Our singing is a gift of ourselves to others, and above all to God."

Thoughts on Dying

By: Margaret Edridge TSSF

We all know we have to die, but mostly we think of it as being in the far distant future. Yes, we make sure our wills are up to date and our affairs are reasonably in order, but....

Over the last 6 months we have learnt that Peter has advanced prostate cancer which is in his bones and lymphatic system and that my brother in New Zealand has a few weeks to a few months to live. Then recently, my cardiologist told me my heart was very weak and even a gentle walk on the flat was banned. 'You could drop dead tomorrow,' I was informed! Admittedly the angiogramme revealed that I do not need any stents nor a bypass, but even so I was deeply challenged to reconsider my spiritual life and my relationship with God.

During this year of Covid19, I restructured my prayer life and reading which has been very grounding spiritually, for which I am truly grateful. However, with the season of Lent approaching, a time of reflection and penitence, I do feel the need for reconciliation and anointing especially in the light of my recent experience.

I wonder if you have considered reconciliation. The thought of confessing our sins can be daunting, but our prayer book service is short and beautiful. Making a list of all our many sins would be impossible, but the *Way of the Pilgrim* gives some wise advice and items to reflect on prior to confession:

1. Don't bring into confession sins of which you have already repented and had forgiven, for that would be to doubt the power of the sacrament of penance.
2. Don't call to mind other people connected with your sins; judge yourself only.
3. Don't mention all the circumstances of the sins but acknowledge them in a general way to avoid temptation both for yourself and for the priest.
4. Acknowledge your penitence is lukewarm and careless, and therefore incomplete.
5. Acknowledge that:

You do not love God as you should;
You do not love your neighbour as yourself;
You do not believe God's Word in the very depths of your heart;
and You privately pride yourself on the good that is within you.

As you can see it is challenging, but it is a worthwhile exercise which I can personally recommend.



*"True progress quietly
and persistently moves
along without notice."*

- *St. Francis Of Assisi*

God, St Francis and Recycling

By: Ann Ellis



In the beginning when God created the universe and ultimately planet earth, God wondered what to do with the dead bits, dead plant and animals . God made earth a closed system so didn't want to waste the dead stuff so God created a circular economy i.e. recycling. The dead stuff is able to decay and go back into the earth and with the help of little creatures like earth worms. dung beetles, maggots etc the dead stuff is transformed into life giving nutrients which feeds live plants and animals. What a solution!

Along comes St Francis. He treats all of God's creation as his brothers and sisters and realises how interconnected everything is and how everything is made to praise God the Creator. He writes the Canticle of the Creatures. Now in his day, he may not have had the knowledge to know the vital role of earthworms, maggots and dung beetles in creating healthy fertile soil. I suspect if he did he would have written a further verse to his canticle in praise of God and sister earthworm, brother maggot and brother dung beetle.

Today, we as co creators with God have invented and made some spectacular things. But we are not very good at recycling, even the easy stuff, compostable waste, and we are pretty abysmal at recycling things like plastics.

Recycling in Australia

In 2017-18, we used some 3.4 million tonnes of plastics in **Australia**. Just 9.4% - 320,000 tonnes - was **recycled**. Of that amount, 46% (145,700 tonnes) was reprocessed in **Australia** and 54% (174,300 tonnes) was exported for reprocessing. With recovery rates so low, that means a valuable resource is going to waste.

Below is a list of some of the things which can't go into the yellow topped bin or general waste . This list is based on Brisbane City Council.

Soft Plastics

All soft plastics such as plastic bags, plastic film or cling wrap, chip packets, toothpaste tubes, bubble wrap, styrofoam and polystyrene products*, straws and disposable nappies. **these cannot go into the recycling bin.**

Plastic bags, plastic film, cling wrap can go to Aldi, Woolies, Coles:

*polystyrene can go to **Local Council recycling centre.***

*Batteries including button batteries (not car) can go to **Battery World.***

*Ink cartridges , mobile phones, computers can go to **Office Works.** Pens can go to **Biome***

*Compact fluorescent lights -CFL's can got to **Local Council recycling centre.** Glasses and cases can go to **opticians***

My church recycles batteries, cfl's, pens, ink cartridges and "cash for cans"

Common Grace Movement

www.commongrace.org.au

Common Grace is a movement of people pursuing Jesus and justice. A grassroots movement that's navigating denominational, theological, and political differences to come together for the common good, discover common ground and share in common grace.

Responding to Jesus' call to love our neighbour, members share the same goals: to listen to stories of injustice, equip individuals and communities, and mobilise Christians to undertake meaningful action to bring about change.

With a core team of thought leaders, creators and campaigners,

Common Grace delivers a range of services including events, consulting, education and practical resources designed to bring Jesus and justice to the centre of everyday life. Collectively, and through its leadership, the movement is raising a generous Christian voice in the public conversation.

Common Grace's initiatives are recognised for creating space for national truth-telling, amplifying the voices of people living injustice, and inviting people to relationship and to take action. Initiatives include Change The Heart, Aboriginal Sunday, Palm Sunday for Refugees, National Reconciliation Week, Refugee Week, NAIDOC Week, Season of Creation, and the UN day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Welcome to Country

We acknowledge, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, the (people) of the (nation), and recognize their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



"We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way."

- St Francis of Assisi

Articles in for Pentecost Edition by 4th May, 2021

Thank you to all who have contributed to this Edition.
Blessings for Lent and Easter.
Gloria



Easter Day in a Paddy Field

By: Reverend Richard Brown

When asked to provide a reflection for our Easter News Letter, I at first thought I don't think so, but! Matthew Jones the Rector of the St. Mary's Parish Ballina, asked, if we could find any Palm Crosses that we might have in a book or some where in the house, as due to Covid 19 the Parish did not celebrate Palm Sunday last year, and so no palm crosses.

What a year 2020 was, with all the restrictions imposed upon our lives which included our normal Sunday worship. The normal preparation for Easter, from Ash Wednesday through to Easter Day was via the internet. This got me thinking about other difficult or strange events which had been imposed upon myself.

I was in South Vietnam, Christmas Day 1966, I found myself along with my platoon out in the field, Christmas day lunch was a cold tin of pork and beans and for the evening it was another cold meal as we were not to heat our meals or make a cuppa. So there wasn't any joy and Christmas the first that I have experienced away from home, just slipped by.

My company was sent out to provide protection to a detachment of artillery, which became our patrol base, from which we would carry out patrols to ensure protection and early warning for the artillery.

My platoon had been sent out to ambush likely approaches to the artillery position over night. In ambush everyone was not permitted to sleep, so as the morning dawned we were very tired as we returned to the patrol base. On our return to the patrol base, my platoon was ordered out back out on a day patrol. As this day patrol was just for the duration of a day we took enough rations for lunch, no back pack with extra rations, sleeping or wet weather gear as we would be back in our patrol base for the evening meal and sleep. But this day patrol turned into a night ambush, no sleep for the second night. It rained and so the platoon was cold and we hungry and very tired as the sun came up on that Sunday morning 6th April 1967.

On entering our patrol base, I cleaned my weapon followed by a hot meal, cup of coffee, shave and bed, just a simple pleasures of an infantry soldier. In the back ground of my beautiful sleep I heard a helicopter above our patrol base, then once again sleep.

"Shorty wake up the Padre is here and he is about to conduct the service for Easter." I just wanted to sleep, but my mate kept trying to get me to go to the service. So with great reluctance, boots on, weapon in hand I followed a group of soldiers to where the Padre Lester Thompson was setting up his altar in the paddy field just inside our base, there was still water about ankle deep in the field. Our group sat on the paddy field bank and waited for the service to begin. It had been a long time since I had been to a service especially an Easter Day service, in fact I couldn't remember when. I do not remember much of the service, but as Padre gave me the cup I remembered his smile, and a sense of inner peace came over me. As he passed down the line of worshippers I took a look at who was in attendance, men from all different denominations, men I thought who some how I didn't expect to be here, and I remembered that I was also an odd one out, going back to my tent I wondered why I attended that service, was it to please my mate who was a Christian, or to add numbers for the padre's service or was God's hand upon me?

Although it was about thirteen years later when I accepted the Lord Jesus into my life, I have never forgotten that Easter Day service in the paddy field in South Vietnam.

The odd group gathered, Padre's smile, that sense of peace that I experienced, what ever happened that day was the reassurance of God's hand on my life.

A Reading from 'The Little Flowers of Saint Francis'.

Taken from : "A Sense of the Divine" – Page 76

Once, Saint Francis was alongside the Lake of Perugia on the day of the Carnival, at the house of a man devoted to him, where he was lodged for the night. He was inspired by God to go to make that Lent on an island in the lake. So Saint Francis asked this devout man that, for love of Christ, he carry him with his little boat to an island of the lake where no one lived and that he do this on the night of the day of Ashes, so that no one would notice. And this man, out of love – for the great devotion he had for Saint Francis – promptly fulfilled his request and carried him to that island. And Saint Francis took nothing with him except two small loaves of bread. Arriving at the island, as his friend was departing to return home, Saint Francis asked him kindly not to reveal to anyone he was there, and that he should not come for him till Holy Thursday. And so, the man departed, and Saint Francis remained alone.

Since here was no dwelling in which he could take shelter he went into some very thick brush that was formed like a little den or a little hut by many bushes and saplings. And in this place he put himself in prayer and contemplation of heavenly things. And there he stayed the whole of Lent without eating or drinking, except for half of one of those little loaves, as his devoted friend found on Holy Thursday when he returned for him; for of the two loaves, he found one whole one and one half; the other half it is supposed, Saint Francis ate, out of reverence for the fast of the blessed Christ, who fasted for forty days and forty nights without taking any material food. And thus, with that half, he drove away from himself vainglory, and after the example of Christ, he fasted forty days and forty nights.

Franciscan & Holy Days To Note 2021

June	13	Anthony of Padua
July	15	Bonaventure
August	4	John Vianney, Cure D'Ars
August	10	The Transitus of St. Clare
August	11	Clare of Assisi
August	14	Maximilian Kolbe
August	15	Mary, The Mother of the Lord
August	25	Louis, King, Patron of the Third Order
September	17	Stigmata of St Francis
October	4	Francis of Assisi
October	11	All Franciscan Saints
November	19	Elizabeth of Hungary

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

What is Lent and Easter Teaching Us!

By: John Dendy

The curtain closed on 2020 with hopes dreams and ambitions for a brighter 2021. Bushfires, floods and an Emergency, week long COVID lock down greeted, us in Western Australia, as have other COVID related issues effecting other parts of this country and our tssf provincial region, and world as the new year, has unfolded.

Is the New Year, 2021, going to be better? Have we not been here before? Biblical trials and tribulations, the Spanish flu, the Cold war, have tested Humankind, which has threatened to wipe us, humans, off the face of the earth.

Yet we are still here, with a greater than sustainable population!

As Easter draws near, I ask myself what am I going to give up. What is sustainable and long term. My answer is; not give up, but take up; that being; “Getting to know God and his will for me”

Not all of us have, easy access to a Labyrinth walk, but in our daily devotions, meditations, enter the labyrinth of your mind. Look at the past, the future: What can I learn?

Where was God in your day? What do you need to let go of? What do you need to stop? Who do you need to forgive? What is one thing God is challenging you to do or change? What is God revealing to you, the truths, he wants you to know and act upon I believe this not to be a Lenten ordeal, of giving up chocolate, but a lifelong challenge, for a better year and future!

* * * * *

Palliative Care

By: Barbara Twells

Palliative Care is part of a journey. Part of life, part of death. Transits of soul. (the stone rolled away)

There will be times of aloneness, times to be with others (Christ in the boat - in the garden)

The medical model can offer symptom control, but no cure (Pilate's view)

And death not often a lonely affair. A hand to be held, a prayer to be said.

A handing over, a letting go..(this is your son, this is your mother)

A borrowed cave. A stone in place. (sceptics and atheists wanting no false claims)

Resurrection and angels. Reality.

- *“All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.”*

– St Francis of Assisi

COVID

Pre covid – there was...normal?

Post covid – What is the ‘new normal’?

By: Fran Hansen

When the covid pandemic crashed into the daily presence of our lives in March 2020, we humans in the Western world especially were suddenly stopped in our tracks on the fast treadmill of life and lifestyle of schedules so packed with lists of ‘to do’ lists – that we were becoming faster and faster, desperately trying to get into the next moment to do the next thing before we’d even lived or finished this one. We’ve forgotten how to be in the moment – especially with God.

We conned ourselves into believing that the pursuit of happiness and quality and security of life was grounded into the gain of material wealth for passing and temporary pleasures of life that please the body, but not the soul. We had convinced ourselves that this was ‘normal’.

The result was, is and always will remain – that if we neglect the care of our souls – no amount of material wealth or its pursuit will make us happy. Without the care of our inner life we become so agitated about time schedules, achievement, possessions and more and more absorbed about our superficial outer life and self – there is no room, space or time to ‘waste’ time on such a thing as care for the soul and being with God. We become disconnected with inner selves, God and others. I suspect that if caring for the soul was suggested or even that there is such a thing as ‘inner life’ - strange looks, sarcastic remarks and or even denial that such a thing exists would ensue from some people. In a few weeks as Christians we will be celebrating Easter. Matthew 6:14 says: “No one can serve two masters: Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

It’s all about choice: When covid stopped us in our tracks – many of us stopped long enough to reassess what is important in our lives – what do we value in our lives? What is (are) the most important thing (s)? Can we be Easter people who, like Francis of Assisi, hear God’s call to follow His son Jesus? Do we return? Renew? And like on Day 10 in our Daily Obedience it says: “The first Christians surrendered completely to our Lord and recklessly gave all that they had...”

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if the ‘new normal’ meant re-imagining our world, turn 180 degrees away from the lure of the world with its materialistic ways and giving all we have as the first Christians did? Perhaps the full capacity of this possibility of this ‘all’ lies in rediscovering in all humility before God the Simplicity in joy of caring for our souls and grounding ourselves in God’s love. Learning how to BE in the moment with God means slowing down – a lot – and learning to see ourselves in love as lovers of all creation as God does: as human BE-ings as God designed us to BE.

We Franciscans, like St Francis, have so much to offer at this particular pandemic time of chaos, confusion, insecurity and uncertainty in history. As the community of the world seeks direction may we exemplify as St Francis did and “...glorify your holy name after the example of St Francis and win others to your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen”



“It is good for us to be here!”

By: David Clarke

Saint Francis tells, when introducing himself to Saint Dominic, that he was told by ... “the Most High to live according to holy Gospel”, and from the Gospel he learned to be a true disciple he had to renounce world he came from and embrace absolute poverty and to trust implicitly God’s Providence. We have been following the Gospel of Saint Mark in Year B of the Revised Common Lectionary, right from verse one he wants to tell us the Good News”; Jesus is Lord. But the other important theme for him was to show us the path of discipleship. And he warns us the Gospel and discipleship come at a cost. The fate of John the Baptist and of course Jesus personally; that powerful scene in Gethsemane on the eve of his death where he begs again and again that the “cup” of suffering be removed.

Now as we embark on our Lenten pilgrimage, across the desert for the forty days, this period of preparation is to remind us of the call by the Lord to repent, to follow him and become one his disciples. It is a time to renew our relationship with the Lord , and we do this by participating in the Lenten practices of daily liturgy, private prayer, holy reading, fasting and self denial, and performance of acts of charity and almsgiving. A time tested journey that is still relevant today.

Lent is seen as a negative season, abstinence from food, drink and entertainment seems to be the common view of it, we can forget that goal of our Lenten pilgrimage is a joyful one. Only a few Sundays ago we read Saint Mark’s account of the Transfiguration. Saint Peter when he found himself in the presence of Christ not only as man but also as God, could only say “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here “. We too in our pilgrimage, in our walk with the Lord, will encounter him in certain moments during this period of our deepened communion with him. These moments will sometimes burst upon us and surprise us like Saint Peter and the other disciples. Other times we will find ourselves entering a place of peace and grace where we know his presence is with us. And at the Eucharist, where the liturgy brings to that moment where



The Crucifixion: By (G della Robbia)

Taken from: “The Sanctuary of La Verna”

By: Rodolfo Cetoloni

The Crucifixion scene is filled with sorrow. This is announced by the inscription on the base, taken from the Bible, “O all you who pass along the way, stop and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow” (Lam 1:12)

Above the writing INRI is the pelican which, so it was thought at one time, when it does not have anything to give its young, pierces its breast so that they can live by feeding on its own flesh. It is a symbol of Jesus Christ who gives his life for all of mankind.

At either side, the saddened sun sends out rays contorted by sorrow, and the moon cries out unrestrainedly and inconsolably. The crucified is pervaded by the colour of death, and four groups of angels take part in the scene as though trembling with sorrow.

Below, the figures which form the base of the scene, St Francis, Mary the Mother of Jesus, St John and St Jerome, are immersed in a contemplation isolating each from the other, but putting each in an individual intimate contact with the death of his or her Lord, crucified for him or her.

Under the cross there is the skull which recalls an ancient legend with a strongly symbolic value: this is the cranium of Adam, buried precisely under Calvary. The blood of the Redeemer first reached him to awaken him from death. In him he gave back life to the whole of humanity.

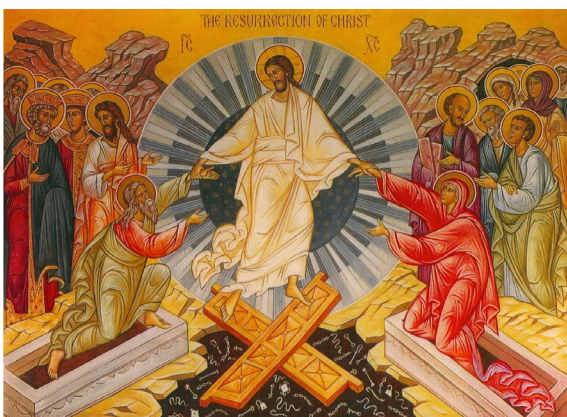
Below that, in the middle of the inscription, a beautiful face of Christ crowned with thorns. At the two extremes the emblem of Alessandri, the Florentine Family which commissioned the work.

* * * * *

Luke 24:1-12 ESV

1. But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. 2. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3. but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6. He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7. that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” 8. And they remembered his words, 9. and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, 11. but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

The Resurrection



“brother, sister let me serve you...” A Lent – Easter Reflection

By: Graham and Qld A tssf.

In the Mission to Seafarer's Chapel of St Nicholas, at the Port of Townsville, we have an allegorical 'Crucifixion', a sculpture of St Francis of Assisi, lowering the body of Jesus down from the cross. We use it as the altar cross in Lent for the Tertiary Franciscan community who meet in the chapel monthly.

Sitting in the chapel at different times of day, I have wondered what Francis must have pondered many times - what would he have done, had he been there at Calvary?

There would have been no thought of him standing aside, watching from a distance as Christ died on the cross. Instead, Francis would have been there alongside the women and John, in solidarity with them, sharing their grief and despair.

And, ever the one to get involved; Francis would have been part of the group taking the lifeless body down from the cross to give to his mother – and then to carry the body to its waiting tomb; even as his own frail body suffered.

Here, I see the reality of Good Friday revealed, and we recall the words of the Stations of the Cross and our Daily Obedience:

“We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.”

We are reassured in the wonderful words from Paul about the love of God for us, and about the attributes of love; and we are also assured that as Christians, we have this unbounded love through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Whatever else we do, whatever else we think, we must strive to do so in love. We are reminded that of the three gifts that we can possess as followers of Christ – faith, hope and love – the greatest of these is love.

The work done in the name of the living Christ by the volunteers and ship visitors here and in all seafaring ministries is also done in love. Although the Covid pandemic has removed the seafarers from our centre, it remains an oasis of peace and prayer in and for the industrial workplace.

Just as St Francis spent his time with ordinary people doing extraordinary things, so we do our best to follow the lead of so many women and men of faith. Acts of love and compassion, of friendship and generosity – stories told by volunteers, chaplains and seafarers who found something special and unique is this home away from home over the past 94 years.



I found this comment on the intimacy of the Crucifixion by Sister Anne-Marie SSFP while browsing the internet on Franciscan communities. It spoke to me of the way in which we are to see the face of Christ in all humanity, and hope that they may see the face of Christ in ours ... a spark of the divine love that God offers to us, through faith in the Beloved.

“Those “godly arms” are not only the arms that embrace my life—they are the arms that are stretched on the cross. The “face” that mirrors “god-in-me” is the bruised face of Jesus. And the deep-welled eyes are filled with blood that drips from the wounds of the crown of thorns. Imagine looking into those eyes and seeing the utter fascination of God’s love for me!”

It is a good time to contemplate on the following questions –

- Do we, as individuals and a Christian Community realise the extent of the love of God for us, that he sent Jesus to show us that love?
- Do we, as individuals and a Christian Community stand with the door open to accept the love that Jesus offers to his sisters and brothers?
- Do we, as individuals and a Christian Community stand to be transfigured by the love we have been offered by the Beloved?

May we serve our neighbours, wherever and whoever they are. May we remember the holy men and women of Church history, of our worldwide Franciscan family who have sought to share the love of the Divine with others. And may the transforming love of Christ be with us all as we move forward to greet our visitors with the resounding affirmation of ‘Alleluia!, Christ is Risen.....Yes, He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Taken from: “Franciscans Day By Day” September 17

By: Eknath Easwaran

The principle underlying the Passion of Christ is that out of his infinite mercy, the Lord has taken our suffering upon himself. As long as any living creature is in pain, so is Jesus, for he lives at the heart of all.

Wherever violence breaks out, no matter how cleverly we try to justify it, we are crucifying the spirit of Christ.

Patience and passion both come from a Latin word meaning to suffer or endure. When we speak of the Passion of Christ, we are recalling the suffering he endured on the cross. Whenever we practice patience – cheerfully bearing with somebody is irascible, or enduring discomfort, rather than imposing it on others – in a small way we are embracing the principle of the Passion. This does not mean becoming blind to what others are doing. I know when somebody is being rude or unkind, but it does not impair my faith in that person. I keep my eyes on the core of goodness in him; and I act toward her as I would have her act toward me. There is only one way to make others more loving, and that is by loving more ourselves.



The Glory of These Forty Days - Clarum Decus Jejunii,

kpschaw.blogspot.com > 2012/12

The Glory of These Forty Days is a 1906 translation by Anglican Minister, Maurice F. Bell (1862-1947) of the 6th century, Latin hymn *Clarum Decus Jejunii*, attributed to Pope St Gregory the Great (540-604). It was first published in 1543 with later harmonies added by J S Bach (1685-1750). In the Liturgy of the Hours, it is used during Lent.

1. The glory of these forty days
we celebrate with songs of praise,
for Christ, through whom all things were made,
himself has fasted and has prayed.

2. Alone and fasting Moses saw
the loving God who gave the law,
and to Elijah, fasting, came
the steeds and chariots of flame.

3. So Daniel trained his mystic sight,
delivered from the lions' might,
and John, the Bridegroom's friend, became
the herald of Messiah's name.

4. Then grant us, Lord, like them to be
full oft in fast and prayer with thee;
our spirits strengthen with thy grace and give us
joy to see thy face.

5. O Father, Son and Spirit blest,
to thee be every prayer addressed,
who art in threefold name adored,
from age to age, the only Lord.

Br Robert Lentz OFM - Icon Painter

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Francis was a universal person whose love extended across boundaries of class, religion and race. His reverence for everything led him to call animals, plants, and all of creation "brother" and "sister." Animals responded to his respect and love with an amazing docility. As Francis walked across medieval Europe, people caught glimpses of what Eden must have been like.

St. Francis helped reform the Roman Catholic Church in the thirteenth century through his example of personal poverty. He simply lived the Gospel as he took monastic life into the streets. Living among the poor, his example was so compelling that soon he had thousands of followers.

Francis' great goal was to follow Jesus as closely as possible. Near the end of his life he spent forty days in solitary prayer on Mt. Alverna. During this time he asked Jesus that he might experience, as much as he could, the love, pain, and grief that Jesus had experienced in his passion. In response to his prayer

Virginia's Handmer's Novicing

By: Fran Hansen (RM NSWB/ ACT REGION)

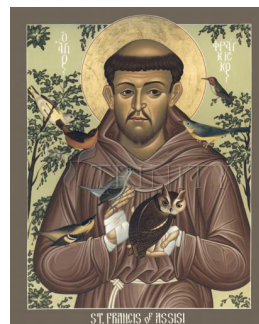


Virginia is the second from the left in the front row. Her novice counsellor is Tania Harvey (back row, second from the right). The Bathurst Franciscans are pleased to have Ginny in our fraternity. We are from the back left row: Fran Hansen, Judy Gordon, Maureen Arnold, Tania Harvey, Richard Steele. Front row, left to right: John Clarkson, Ginny, Lee Steele, Lorraine Clarkson.



"The Divine Fire of Spirit burns brightly even in the Lenten Desert."

- Jeni Nix



Continued:

he was given the stigmata — wounds in his hands, feet and side. The wounds remained, never healing, for the rest of his life.

Before Francis died, he asked his brothers to strip him of his ragged brown robe so that in total poverty he might lie naked on the bare ground. He had lived as God's troubadour, a bright flame by which others could read the Gospel with fresh insight and vision.

Pace e Bene