



The Province of Asia-Pacific

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

NEWSLETTER

ADVENT

Provincial Ministers Report & Advent Newsletter article - November 25th 2021

Dear sisters and brothers, 'grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.' (*Philippians 1.2*) and a happy and holy Advent to you.

It has been a year since I became Provincial Minister and what a year it has been! The first Note of Day 24 reminds me that '*when asked to undertake a task of which we feel unworthy or incapable, we do not shrink from it, but confidently attempt it through the power that is made perfect in weakness.*'

I offer my deepest thanks to you all for electing me, for praying for me, and thank you for your patience as I learn to navigate the many groups and places we Franciscans connect with. I ask you to join me in prayer believing that 2022 will be a calmer year for us all.

We give deep and sincere thanks to our sister Gloria Malouf-Marsh who has been editing the Newsletter now for 12 years. This will be her last edition. Gloria has tirelessly, creatively and meticulously blended together a rich resource of joy, reflection and profiles in our Newsletter, encouraging us in our faith and Franciscan walk. She has decided that it is time to hand over this important work to someone else in the Order. So please send your thanks to her, pray for a new editor and let me know if you would like to help. Gloria has kindly offered to help to the new editor and I am sure she will appreciate your words of thanks. God bless you dear Gloria.

Australians are now becoming accustomed to acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live and work and travel. We recognize their continuing connection to land, water and community and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

In the world-wide Third Order we are upholding indigenous people's rights. Please see the new video we have helped to finance; "*An Important Message from the Anglican Third Order - Walking With Our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters.*"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmxnP-kL7cs>

In 2021 we also acknowledge that it is the 800th year since the foundation of the Third Order. In 1221 many devout men and women wanted to follow Francis' rule while raising families and working. They longed for a rule of life that promised the renewal of Christian living that Francis' followers were preaching. So, Francis declared his 'threefold army' by adding the Third Order to his own associates and those of St Clare. We thank God that the Holy Spirit moved Francis to create the three orders and that over 800 years and in many lands God still moves Franciscans to unite in peace, care for others and model our founder's love for Christ in the world.

Remembering that compared to so many, we face very little discomfort, please pray for Papua New Guinea. This message arrived by email from our sister Rita Simeni. "*Dear Glenys, greetings. The pandemic of Coronavirus is hitting many parts of PNG. Fear is growing in me because I have weak lungs from past TB. It is a reality of the Third Wave of this virus and there are many deaths with no funeral service. Keeping you in my prayers and TSSF Obedience. Love and prayers, Rita tssf.*"

This is the first message we have heard from PNG in 18 months, please continue to pray for our sisters and brothers there. Only 1-4% of their population is vaccinated and virtually no clinical practitioners are available in remote areas.

May God give you the power of such love for Jesus Christ, fiery and sweet as honey, that you may live and die for love of him who in love, created and saved us all.

(From the Asorbeat - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7WRic8n7UI>)

Mandy tssf



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

Christian Discipleship Today Exploring Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

John Gibson tssf NSW B/ACT.

In this issue of our Newsletter I draw together my thoughts on the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience which I have reflected upon, drawing on the insights of the Sisters in the book, “for Peace & for Good. A History of the European Province of the Community of St Francis” by Helen Stanton written in 2017. (Where I quote from the book I have identified it by FP&FG and the page number.) My original intention was to reflect only upon chastity which I thought was the most misunderstood and difficult to explain, but I soon realised that each of the vows are profound and form an integral whole. None of them stands alone for us but together form a way of living totality.

To quote from page 162 of FP&FG “ Living totality is the *opus Dei* -the work of God. The paradox of the way of totality is that it is the work of grace in creation. As we turn in this way, we find that we are mysteriously participating in the life of God, and that life is whole, inclusive and is love, unbounded and eternal”. The experience of this is that in responding wholeheartedly to God’s invitation we are set free.”

This sense of the totality of all things is grounded in prayer especially the Eucharist, as we are aptly reminded in Days 14 to 16 in our Manual. Without prayer we ‘dry up’ and are not able to respond or have the grace to participate in the life of God in all its fullness.

In conclusion the Sisters referred to the Methodist Covenant Service as a source of inspiration in relation to the vow of Obedience; which I think can be applied across every aspect of “living totality”. Here is the quote from the Covenant Service.

“ I am no longer my own but yours
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal”. (FP&FG page 76)

This book has given me insights for living the Franciscan life today. Thank you to Helen Stanton and the Sisters.

The Jesus Prayer

Taken from: “Living the Jesus Prayer”

By: Irma Zaleski

The Jesus Prayer is an ancient form of prayer, of being attentive to God who manifested himself to us in Christ. The practice of the Jesus Prayer began in the early centuries of Christianity, as a prayer of monks and nuns, the desert Fathers and Mothers, but it was soon taught to an ever-increasing number of lay people. It is also known as the Prayer of Jesus, the Prayer of the Name of Jesus, unceasing prayer, and prayer of the heart. It has been handed down to us in an unbroken tradition. Until recently, it has mainly been practised by the Eastern Orthodox Church, but is becoming known to increasing numbers of Christians in the West. It is now practised by countless men and women, lay as well as religious, all over the world.

Its form is very simple. It consists of constant repetition of just a few words: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner,” or “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,” or “Lord Jesus, have mercy, “ or a single word: Jesus.” The exact wording does not matter as long as the Name of Jesus is central to it. For it is that name “that is above all names” that is our way to the centre of ourselves, the door to our “inner room” where God lives.

Contemplation and The story of Greccio

Excerpt from: “Clare of Assisi”

Page 58

By: Ilia Delio, OSF

The story of Greccio, where Francis celebrated the birth of Jesus, indicated that Francis saw more than a mere child in a manger. He had an altar constructed over the manger and a Mass celebrated, calling to mind the wonder of the Incarnation. With his heart aflame with love and his eyes streaming with tears, he considered the overflowing goodness of God poured out for us in the birth of Jesus and in the beauty of creation. The birth of Jesus was not an event of the past for Francis but a living reality of God’s abiding presence in creation. God is not an abstract concept expression of this love, but a living reality of love, and it is this love which Francis discovered at the heart of the Incarnation.

In Bonaventure’s view, one who knows Christ, knows this love, and the one who knows this love knows each element of creation as the expression of this love.

Don’t walk behind me; I may not

lead. Don’t walk in front of me; I

may not follow. Walk beside me that

we may be as one.

Ute saying – North America

Mary, Our Mother and Model

Excerpt taken from: "Live Like Francis"

By: Jovian Weigel, OFM, and Leonard Foley, OFM



Like all good mothers, Mary teaches us. Above all, she teaches us humility. The sister of poverty in the mind of Francis, humility is nowhere more beautifully expressed than in the song of Mary, the Magnificat. Mary was humble recognizing her complete unworthiness before God. She trusted confidently in the perfect love of God. One way to honour Mary is by saying the Crown of the Seven Joys of Mary (known as the Franciscan Rosary). Francis's emphasis on joy is reflected in this devotion begun by one of his followers. We are all in a "vale of tears."

- (1) The Annunciation
- (2) The Visitation
- (3) The Birth of Our Lord
- (4) The Adoration of the Magi
- (5) The Finding in the temple
- (6) The Appearance of Christ to Mary' after the Resurrection
- (7) The Assumption and Coronation

Luke 1:39-56 - **Mary's Song**

⁴⁶ And Mary said:
 "My soul glorifies the Lord
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
 From now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—



holy is his name.

- ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.
- ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
- ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.
- ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.
- ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."
- ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

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

- Francis of Assisi

"Happy the soul to whom it is given to attain this life with Christ, to cleave with all one's heart to him whose beauty all the heavenly hosts behold forever, whose love inflames our love, the contemplation of whom is our refreshment, whose graciousness is our delight, whose gentleness fills us to overflowing, whose remembrance makes us glow with happiness, whose fragrance revives the dead, the glorious vision of whom will be the happiness of all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. For he is the brightness of eternal glory, the splendour of eternal light, the mirror without spot."

- St. Clare of Assisi

Clare of Assisi's Method of Contemplation

Excerpt taken from:

<https://contemplativevision.wordpress.com> > clare-of-as...

St. Clare was a partner with St. Francis in the formation of Franciscan spirituality. Clare wrote to St. Agnes of Prague, and she articulated a method of visual prayer. The four-fold pattern can be identified as gazing, considering, contemplating, and imitating.

During this prayer, Clare's prayer expresses a deep mutual relationship with God through art. It begins with gazing upon the image, then moves inward to self-identity, identity, and transformation, and finally outward as we reflect God's face to the world.

Gaze: to fix one's attention in one place in a relaxed way. Rest your eyes on what you see, and let it still you. Though eyes and thoughts may be drawn elsewhere, bring them back to the image that is the focus of your prayer.

Consider: Involve your mind and your imagination. What is before you? What strikes you in what you see? What do you glimpse of God through it? Do you sense a challenge or a call? Can you give what you are feeling a name?

Contemplate: a mystical seeing, a prayer of silence, of emptying oneself of all but the Spirit of Christ. Rather than being active in your observation or trying to identify new insights, be present to what you have already thought or felt. This is a time of simply being there, present to God as God is present to you.

Imitate: Clare and Francis understood that we encounter the presence of Christ most genuinely when we live God's truth with our own lives. Praying with art, as with all prayer, moves us toward transformation. We become the one we love.

A Case for Simplicity and Technology for Franciscans:

By: The Rt Revd Keith Slater

I was inspired to write my thoughts at this 2021 Francis-tide as we met to celebrate St Francis Day, as two people made their Profession, and as Professed and Novices made their Renewals.

In one sense the service was limited. We were not all able to meet face-to-face because of the possibility of an impending lockdown in Queensland due to more cases of coronavirus.

Even so that provoked my thinking on simplicity and modern technology. I was not able to be there in person, but through the wonder of Zoom I felt like I was there, and had an enhanced sense of the community gathered. Three quarters of the congregation were online!

I had a sense of being connected as community - geographically from Grafton, to Ballina, to Brisbane, to Maryborough, to Bundaberg, to Biloela - a community in dispersion connected through the simplicity of modern technology.

It made me more aware of how we perceive simplicity. In terms of time, energy, and resources that would have been expended by individuals coming to our Francis-tide face-to-face gathering it would have been an expensive and time consuming exercise.

Is this a 'new' aspect of simplicity for a community in dispersion? Over the years we have spoken of being this dispersed community bound together by our daily prayer in the Community Obedience. And this is so. We have also sought to stay connected through letters, and more recently we have largely embraced emails. Now we are given a tool which can visually and audibly connect us as we worship and converse together. What a gift to a dispersed community!

I certainly would not want to discount the important value of face-to-face gatherings which give the opportunity for deeper conversations and personal interactions. But we do, I believe, need to ensure that for all our Regional Gatherings there is a Zoom component for those unable to be present because of distance, time, age, etc.....



From the Provincial Chapter in 1994

By: The Rt Revd Keith Slater

A little bit of history:

at the 1994 Provincial Chapter an in-depth discussion took place regarding what constitutes Third Order community and ways of building such community.

The following paper was drafted as a Description of Third Order community and was circulated for discussion and feedback from Regions and Area Fellowships:

“Third Order Community:

We are a community because we are called by God into the Third Order and live under a common discipline.

Our call by God is the origin and centre of our experience of the Third Order community. This call by God is to live under the inspiration of St Francis and Franciscan spirituality.

This gift of community binds us together through the common discipline of:

The Rule of the Third Order

The Personal Rule of Life

The Community Obedience,

and The Profession Cross.

The results of this bonding are a sense of belonging and identity, a shared experience of being part of the Order, and a shared worship experience expressed in a distinctive ethos and spirituality.

God creates the community. We are called to foster and express this community in our life together. This task is the responsibility of each member of the Order.

The following are suggestions to help build on the foundation of the common discipline:

Worship, Newsletters (Area and Regional), Community Obedience, prayer chains, Convocation or Regional Gatherings, equal say in direction of community life - sense of ownership, personal contact on day of intercession, phone contact between meetings - core group responsibility, Regional Minister's Letters with personal responses, replies to annual reports, Novice Counsellor workshops, phone meetings, intentional prayer letters/visits, formation process, continuous experiential exploration of Franciscan spirituality, sharing of our stories (in Provincial Newsletter), creative arts eg dance, mime etc, General Conference and Chapter, quiet days/retreats, Area fellowships, informal meal gatherings, planned social occasions, all take responsibility for fostering community, Provincial video, hospitality for travelling tertiaries.”



Reflections



The Daily Prayers and the Courage to Ask for Prayer

By: Revd Roslyn Clifton

As I write this, it is 11 November a day of remembering. In the cycle of daily prayers, the eleventh of every month is the date I know the community prays for me and ten other Franciscans. Praying is a link for us all as a dispersed community of faith. We are all prayed for during the month. It is something we do for each other. We remember one

another in prayer.

Sometimes I have been prompted to write a card, send a text or call someone on the day I see their name in the prayers for that day. It is something I value deeply knowing we pray for each other every month.

Sometimes, I receive emails when someone requests specific prayer as there is a need for this ministry. Earlier this year, I read one of these emails and I was shaken to my core. I could understand why this prayer request had been sent to the community. Over the years, I knew what pain I had felt in similar circumstances. I prayed for the person but for days I became more and more sad. I cried because I was carrying deep emotional pain. I was on a journey towards healing, and I didn't believe I could ask the community to pray for me.

Two friends had listened and carried me in their prayers. I was feeling this was quite a burden for them over a few years. Why didn't I ask for prayers? I had in the past. Why couldn't I now ask?

The pain, the shame, the fear of speaking about sexual abuse as a child by the parish priest in the church I attended was too much for me to name and ask for prayers.

His words, "No one will believe you!" rang in my ears!

How does a child hear these words? What are their effect decades later?

Breaking the silence and naming abuse come with shock and much fear.

What's it like to speak words of truth about child sexual abuse? It is terrifying. It takes enormous courage. It is life changing.

Then something happened in my own prayers. I decided to ask a small group of Franciscans to pray for me. I spent time waiting to hear God's prompting of who to ask. I decided to ring and tell my story to each person that I approached. Everyone was so supportive and kind. I was believed. I was learning to break the silence and believe others would pray and I felt less isolated in my journey towards healing. I am so grateful for the prayers of others. One never knows how the daily pray list we all follow will comfort another Franciscan on their day. For me it was a lifeline. Please pray for me as I continue this journey. It is my hardest journey.

A MEDITATION

By: Ann Ellis

"Creation spirituality reveals our human arrogance, and maybe that's why we are afraid of it. Maybe that's why we're afraid to believe that God has spoken to us primarily in *what is*. Francis of Assisi was basically a hermit. He lived in the middle of nature. And if we want nature to come to life for us, we have to live in the middle of it for a while. When we get away from the voices of human beings, then we really start hearing the voices of animals and trees. They start talking to us, as it were. And we start talking back. Foundational faith, I would call it, the grounding for personal and biblical faith." *Richard Rhor*



The following is a meditation offered during the Season of Creation. It can be used for a group or an individual, in a garden, a park, the bush.

A MORNING OF QUIETNESS AND PRAYERFUL WONDER

1. *Become aware of God's presence.*

How do you feel knowing that the Holy Spirit has filled this place for geological ages, with every plant, animal, organism and mineral that has called this place home in the deep past, makes its home here with you now, and will live here with creatures in this place in the future? How do you feel knowing that you, earthling, belong to this place, are made of the same carbon, breathe the same air, are nurtured by the same cycles and life processes, and are enlivened by the same Spirit of the Creator?

Activate your senses. Touch. See. Listen. Smell.

2. *Reflect on the ecological cycles of this place with gratitude for all that it provides. What nutrient cycles are supported by this place? Is this a watershed that filters water? Is this a rainforest (tropical or deciduous) that fixes nutrients? Is this a green space that absorbs CO2 and cleans the air? What plants, animals, microbes and minerals are sheltered here? How do they serve the whole earth in their being? For all that this place provides to nurture you and all that belong to this place, let a feeling of gratitude fill you.*

3. *Pay attention to what you feel as you contemplate the fragility. What are the sources of stress that threaten the balance of this particular ecosystem? Do those stresses drive your co-creatures from their home in this place? How do you feel when you consider the fragility of life that depends on the health of this place? What is your effect on this balance?*

4. *Choose one feature of the site and pray for it, its rest and its renewal.*

5. *Based on your time of reflection, how do you identify with this place? What have you discerned is required to care for this place? What will be your act of compassion to promote rest for this common home? Has your sense of connection reverence and gratitude deepened for this place?*



AT THE END OF THE YEAR

By: John O'Donohue

Sent to me

By: Jayne Hughes

The particular mind of the ocean

Filling the coastline's longing

With such brief harvest

Of elegant, vanishing waves

Is like the mind of time

Opening us shapes of days.

As this year draws to its end,

We give thanks for the gifts it brought

And how they became inlaid within

Where neither time nor tide can touch them.

The days when the veil lifted

And the soul could see delight;

When a quiver caressed the heart

In the sheer exuberance of being here.

Surprises that came awake

In forgotten corners of old fields

Where expectation seemed to have quenched.

The slow, brooding times

When all was awkward

And the wave in the mind

Pierced every sore with salt.

The darkened days that stopped

The confidence of the dawn.

Days when beloved faces shone brighter

With light from beyond themselves;

And from the granite of some secret sorrow

A stream of buried tears loosened.

We bless this year for all we learned,

For all we loved and lost

And for the quiet way it brought us

Nearer to our invisible destination.



The above from left: Revd Gemma Dashwood, Revd Selena McMahon, Revd Nicholas Whereat and Revd Stephen Briggs

Professions

By: Jeni Nix

On the 2nd of October amidst the challenges of Covid, a handful of us gathered in the St Francis College Chapel to celebrate the Professions of David Nix and Selina McMahon. The positive side of our Regional Gathering being via zoom included the ability for those living at a distance or with access issues to participate in the joys of renewals and Professions as one community. Congratulations and welcome, David and Selina!

Reflection on Being Franciscan

By: Revd David Nix

My road to profession was longer than it is for many in TSSF (though I know there are many who have journeyed for a lot longer).

As a Methodist in my youth, an active Uniting Church member all my adult life and, in more recent years, an ordained Minister in the Uniting Church, the world of Saints and following in their footsteps was quite foreign to me. I, as most of the worlds Christians, knew who St Francis was and his connection with the natural world and his vows of poverty. It was not until I sat under some Richard Rohr teaching in the context of some men's work in 2012 that I understood more of St Francis and Franciscan spirituality and theology.

For me there are two major delights that are at the same time the major challenges of being Franciscan. Firstly, the call to love universally based on Jesus' universally redeeming love. This is key to being a Christian for all who follow Jesus, but the Third Order Community Obedience and my Rule of Life keep it ever before me and expand it to all of creation. I have always found it difficult to love and accept the "other" if I find myself fearful in their presence. The story of Francis and the leper has helped me greatly in recent times showing how we are called to allow God's love to override our fear.

Secondly the call to live simply. This has been the biggest challenge and blessing in being a novice and now professed member of the Third Order. Simplicity is a perspective that is so foreign in our technology dependent and competitive society, and it is a challenge each day to simplify rather than further complicate my life. I have found a deep need to frequently stop and reflect about what it really means. It is so easy to blindly accept what appears to be the normal and expected thing in Australia in the 21st Century. Being Franciscan brings a release and a new perspective in our hectic world.



My Orchid Garden

By: Peter Brunker

I live on the Central Coast of NSW. Some of you may know that I grow Orchids. I have probably around four to five hundred. Australian Native Orchids are probably my favourite and make up the bulk of my collection. Although, I do have many exotic orchids too.

Spring is a wonderful time for flowering, especially Australian native varieties, but its also one of the busiest times for the Orchid grower; identifying which orchids need repotting because they need new composts, and some are crying out for space in their pots. And mounted orchids... those growing on log mounts, are another thing altogether !

I have a moderately large shade house where most of the Orchids live. Along one side of the shade house I have a garden with a narrow path lined by Roses on each side. At the end of the pathway there is an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I call this garden Mary's garden. This garden is a quiet space; it has a silence about it I cannot quite explain.

I walk past this pathway many times a day on most days, and when I do I am always reminded to pray and give thanks for Mary's simple "yes" to God.

Now back to the repotting. When there are many Orchids to repot it can take hours over many days... I still have not finished doing all the repotting that needs to be done and we are nearly into summer! I have found that the hours spent repotting and the fertilising that comes with it, can be a wonderful time to think about my life and how I also need tending too.. you might like to call it spiritual fertilising and cultivating.

I often remind myself, especially when potting about the garden and tending to the Orchids that God does not expect perfection, but expects us to do something to be more like him... to fertilise and tend to our spiritual growth, just as we tend to our gardens.

I give thanks for my garden, I think it's simple yet beautiful, and I give thanks for Marys "yes" to God, a wonderful thing to contemplate as we approach Christmass in the season of Advent.

Oh, and just a thought. Gardens are usually considered to be peaceful places and from my experience they usually are. Yet gardens in the Bible are often places of passion, sadness and violence. I don't suppose we should be surprised at this considering what happened in the garden of Eden ☺ !

Gen 3: 17-19

The Pandemic

Written By: Debbie Kopada

Email sent to me

By: Ms Rita Simeni, Popondetta, PNG

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to write to you for the Advent Edition. The pandemic is hitting Papua New Guinea very badly. We are asking The Order to uphold us in prayer. It is very scary but the reality is the deadly virus is in the country and people are dying and are being buried without funeral services. Thank God, we are getting assistance through media and other advocacies.

My promise is yet to know whether we have been infected.

Advent with the Forward Movement

By: Margaret Edridge tssf

What a long time of lock down we have mastered. I have found a time for meditation and contemplation and enhancing much of my reading over the past year or so. A truly blessed time. So in a way, I am going to be quite sorry when all our activities start up again and we look forward to sharing Christmas with family and friends, with all the joy that brings, but also all the busyness that entails.

I have belonged to the Forward Movement, an Episcopalian publishing organisation, for several years but postage from the USA now is astronomical. However, there is a wealth of free work on their website to develop and enhance our spirituality. For instance: <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/home> This page links you to various forms of Daily Prayer – the Daily Office, Daily Readings, Daily Devotions, Forward Day by Day and Pray Anytime. There is also a space to note your preferences.

Recently, I have just been notified of **Advent Word** by Forward Movement. It is an international community of prayer through the Advent season, where Christians around the world join together to focus each day of advent on a particular word drawn from the current Lectionary. This international community of prayer has been operating for some 8 years, but I have never heard of it before. It has been operating previously under #AdventWorld providing a daily meditation visual image and personal reflections from around the world, but is now available through Forward Movement.

There will no doubt be some changes to format, but I am looking forward to participating in a new venture now that we are virtually out of lockdown. On the link <https://adventword.org/en/home/> you are able to see the list of words for reflection for each day of Advent starting on November 28.

I pray that this Advent prayer community will be a blessing to all those who participate.

My Boniface

By: Mac Campbell

Ah, so it is you, dear Boniface! How St Francis has used you! No man has ever influenced me more than you. I saw how you honoured your mother every Saturday by your hard work cleaning Portiuncula, the house we shared with the brothers in Canterbury. I saw how your values and attitudes played out in your words. I shared your suspiciousness of outward religiosity. I saw how you honoured your father with your knowledge of house building with hand tools. I enjoyed your "I'm just a farm boy" pretence, because it was coming from somewhere real, a simple enjoyment of the natural world. You could see that every creature praises God in its own way, and I could see your joy. So you have had the luck to be the one to show me who I really was, dear old boy. Since then, my Franciscan way has enabled me to say why I enjoy kissing lepers; spending my time with the unlucky people in my village. The riff-raff, those with mental illness and intellectual impairment. These are my exciting friends.

Yesterday on my back verandah, I helped during a Franciscan eucharist. Around a long simple table, 11 of us seculars spent from 9 to 11 am looking out over the garden. Amongst us there were a retired bishop and 4 priests, but they were quite unexalted, as we prayed our simple prayers and renewed our professions. I'm a sort of secular coordinator here. They want me to do it again next year. Thinking back, I wonder whether Franciscans are too educated, too middle class, too comfortable. Being comfortable and middle class enables me to kiss lepers, so I am thankful. The last thing I want to say to you, dear Boniface, is to remind you of how you said to me, "See that rabbit?" He's praising God!" That's the moment when my philosophical commitments caught up with me, and I became ready for your message, "Mac, you've always been a Franciscan". Thank you Boniface Kyalo, and I also thank your mother and your father. Remember Lot's wife.

The Franciscan Call

By: Helen Sexton, Associate

Why is Franciscan Christianity important today?

1. It is an Inter-Faith call, We remember St Francis' mission to Islam in North Africa. We are reminded to listen and understand the values of other Faiths, especially the Abrahamic Faiths: Judaism and Islam.
2. It is an Interdenominational call. The life and example of St Francis are taught, not only in Anglicanism, but in the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches. This becomes the knitting of communities in churches. The loving kindness of St Francis speaks of the inspiration and from the life of Christ.
3. We need to be reminded to give priority to issues of social justice, animal welfare, wildlife and conservation, and including issues and concerns in the "Environment".
4. This is a time to meditate and praise his Holy Name. i.e.. "We adore you, Oh Christ, and we bless you, here, (and in all your churches throughout the world) because, by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world!
5. It is important for us all to make a difference in the world in our Franciscan life carry this out in humility and simplicity, and emulate the example of St Francis.

As Bishop Bevan Meredith, former Primate of P.N.G. has stated: "It is the willingness to live the Gospel, which marks the Saint.

"To the greater Glory of God"

PATHS TO GOD

No. 3 - The Damascus Road

By: Anne Kotze

Read Acts 9 v.1-19

Our third road is the Damascus Road that is Conversion.

Saul's is perhaps the most dramatic conversion of all time. He was trained as a Pharisee and a Rabbi by Gamaliel, a great teacher in Jerusalem. His whole life had been straining to be the perfect Jew, living up to the tremendous demands of this Jewish Law which had over 500 rules and regulations.

Conversion may be a gradual process and not like Saul's thunder and lightning. We may have been followers of our Lord for years but then one day we don't just hope... we believe.

It takes a lot of courage to go down the Damascus Road. We are asked to change into someone of a different character a radical change. We need to say, I have been wrong. We need to say, I need help, Lord.

This is usually difficult because it is such a blow to our pride and self-esteem.

My promise is yet to know whether we have been infected.

We will need humility to accept help along the new road. For some it may mean experiencing real suffering from those who do not understand the change in us, experienced, of course by St. Francis in his home town of Assisi. For others it may be a quiet change of heart and attitude and a new joy in the worship of God.

Francis Thompson the poet, who incidentally was a Franciscan Tertiary, felt this same need to flee.

I fled him down the nights and down the days,
I fled him down the arches of the years;
I fled him down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind.
Yet I was sore adread
Lest, having him, I must have naught beside St. Francis'
conversion was brought about by his imprisonment and his illness. So often it is when we are given time to think, time to be silent, time to be idle, that we are able to hear our Lord's voice saying, "Follow me".



Sin C

By: Sandra Beck 9 Nov 2021

It's like any pool-
An average swimming pool,
A waterfall A river,
The rubbish floats to the top.
We skim it off
We think, 'There, it's clean'.
But then
Before very long
Another layer of dirt floats up.
The process begins again.
It's the same with grief.



The miraculous icon of Panagia Myrtidiotissa (“of the Myrtle Tree”), Kythera –
Commemorated on September 24 (icon taken from:
<http://www.rel.gr/photo/displayimage.php?album=34&pos=152>)

“The Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos “Of the Myrtle Tree” (Myrtidiotissa) is in the monastery church of Myrtides on the Greek island of Kythera. It derives its name from the fact that it was found in a myrtle bush in the fourteenth century.

At that time, a shepherd was tending his sheep in a deserted valley which was filled with myrtle bushes. On September 24, forty days after the Dormition, the Mother of God appeared to him and told him to seek her icon which had been brought to that place many years before.

The shepherd fell to the ground in amazement, praying to the Theotokos. As soon as he got up and turned around, he saw the icon in the branches of a myrtle bush. Weeping for joy, he brought the icon home and told his friends and relatives about how he had found it.

When he awoke the next morning, the shepherd found the icon missing, and thought that perhaps someone had stolen it during the night. With a heavy heart, he led his sheep back to the spot where he had found the icon. To his amazement, he saw the icon once again in the branches of the myrtle bush. Glorifying God, the man took the icon home with him once more. The next morning, it had disappeared just as it had before. When this happened a third time, the shepherd realized that the Mother of God wanted her icon to remain where it had first appeared.



The Lambeth Conference – God’s church for God’s world

<https://www.lambethconference.org>

Welcome to official web site of the fifteenth Lambeth Conference
27 July – 8th August 2022.

Convened by The Archbishop of Canterbury in 2022, the Lambeth Conference is a gathering of bishops from across the Anglican Communion for prayer and reflection, fellowship and dialogue on church and world affairs.

With the theme of ‘God’s Church for God’s World - walking, listening and witnessing together,’ the conference will explore what it means for the Anglican Communion to be responsive to the needs of a 21st Century world.

The journey to the conference starts during 2021, where there will be opportunities for prayer, dialogue and reflection, involving the conference community – and wider Anglican World.

What is it? 2022 is the year of the fifteenth Lambeth Conference. The theme is God’s Church for God’s World – Walking, Listening and Witnessing Together. The Lambeth Conference is a once-a-decade gathering of bishops from across the Anglican Communion.

Where and when? Convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the conference will meet in 2022. Before the conference meets, there will be time given for prayer, preparation and dialogue. There will be three phases to the Lambeth Conference journey. [Read more.](#)

Vision and purpose This event plays an influential role in the life of the Anglican Church and gathers together bishops and spouses for prayer, bible study, worship and fellowship and helps shape the life of the Anglican Communion for the next decade.

Biblical focus As the Lambeth Conference explores the theme of being ‘God’s Church for God’s World’, the Biblical focus for the event will be the book of 1 Peter. A wide range of resources have been developed for use in Bible studies, discussions and seminars.

Eulogy of Br Daniel Fairbairn Matthews

Br Daniel Matthews SSF
By: Rt Revd Godfrey Fryar

For the past 8 years, we have been part of the Franciscan Parish of St Philips Annerley in Brisbane, and each Sunday we were greeted at the door of the Church by Br Daniel.

Now that he has died, we miss him so much.

Daniel was born in the North of England and was very proud to be a Geordie! He could sing “When the boat comes in’ on request!

He and his wider family lived close together in a street in South Shields. Daniel became a Ships Engineer, and a photo of him in uniform has turned up as his things have been sorted since he died. He looks very smart!

He eventually moved into another ‘uniform’ when he joined SSF as a Novice in June 1964.

He was professed in 1967 and moved to Australia soon afterwards to be part of the fledgling SSF community at Brookfield in Brisbane. From there he moved to the Solomon Islands where he was a foundation brother for the SSF community which is now the largest Province of SSF in the world. It was there that he was ordained priest.

He loved the Melanesian people and even after many years based in Brisbane, he was sought out by Solomon Islanders who came to Australia.

He was a leader in SSF for many years, including service as Minister General.

As he grew older, he often spoke of his experiences in the islands, and his recurring theme in sermons was the Christian calling to be ‘Alter Christii’, other Christs to the people we meet, in the way of St Francis.

Daniel met Sister Death on the feast day of St Vincent de Paul, September the 27th. Following his Requiem Mass at St Philips, he was buried in the little Anglican Cemetery next to the old wooden Christ Church Tingalpa ,which incidentally was the place where in the 1930’s Bishop George Halford ,my predecessor as second Bishop of Rockhampton ,who had renounced his position and possessions, attempted to establish The Order of Witness ,a religious community in the spirit of St Francis, which was a predecessor of SSF which came thirty years later.

That however is another story!

While we miss Br Daniel, we rejoice in faith that he is close to us in the Communion of Saints with our Lady, St Francis, and St Clare.



A True Franciscan

By: Helen Sexton, Associate

I’m just writing to remember and offer my respects to our late exemplary Franciscan Brother and Priest – Father Daniel F. Matthews.

I just met Br Daniel in early Lent of the year 2000, when he lead a mission to our church here at St Mark’s Warwick.

I remember a telling line from his sermon – “The Tree from which the Cross was cut was weeping”. Only a Franciscan of great duration could express this profound feeling.

We recall Father daniel’s faithful ministry to patients at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, across that busy road.

Then there was Father Daniel’s generous contribution of his time and effort to Anglican Aid Abroad, specifically as treasurer, an undervalued role.

In his last illness, despite everything Father Daniel was faithful to the end.

May he rest in Peace and rise in Glory.

Franciscan & Holy Days To Notes 2021/2022

December	1	Requiem for all departed Franciscans
December	8	Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
December	25	THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
January	16	The First Franciscan Martyr
February	9	Anglican Franciscan Pioneers
March	2	Ash Wednesday
April	15	Good Friday
April	17	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

The prayer of Saint Francis before the San Damiano crucifix

Most High and glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of our hearts
and give us a true faith,
a certain hope
and a perfect love.

Give us a sense of the divine
and a knowledge of yourself,
so that we may do everything
in fulfilment of your holy will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Obituary of Revd David Overington

By: Revd Sally Buckley. tssf, WA

Assistant Provincial Minister

10 November 1934 – 9 September 2021.



David Vernon Overington was born in 1934 in Hastings, Sussex, the first child to Ena and Vernon Overington, the eldest of four sons. He grew up in Tolworth, Surbiton, where he was a choir boy at St George’s Church, and later in Maulden, Bedford.

He trained for priesthood at the London College of Divinity and was ordained to the priesthood in 1961. He was curate in Rochester, Southwell, Nottingham and Derby, before serving as Priest in Charge at Cubley, Derbyshire.

He met his beloved Joyce in 1952 and they were married in 1957 and had four children, Liz, Steve, Tim and Julia.

In 1976, he responded to an invitation from the Bishop of Bunbury to come to Western Australia to serve in the Anglican Church here. David felt this was God’s call and served the parishes of Bridgetown and Denmark, then Palmyra and Wembley in Perth Diocese, as well as some time as Field Officer for the Anglican Department of Education in Perth. David and Joyce returned to the UK in 1999, where he served, in a “House for Service” ministry, first in the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, then further south, having Permission to Officiate in Rochester then Guildford.

As I am currently serving in the Parish of Denmark-Walpole, I can attest to the fact that David, who served here between 1979 and 1984, is still held in high esteem by those who remember him.

I have been unable to find out when or where David was professed into the Third Order of the Society of St Francis. One source says it was during his time here, in Australia, whereas another suggested that he was already a Tertiary when he arrived here in the ‘70’s. Nevertheless, David was a Franciscan through and through. As Revd Patrick Bateman from Holy Trinity Church, Claygate, described David at the start of the Thanksgiving Service, he was: “humble, gifted, Godly, a quiet inspiration and great encourager who celebrated life”.

David was the Regional Minister for Western Australia, when I joined the Third Order in 1988, and gently led WA out of a very difficult time into a period of stability and growth.

He was Provincial Chaplain from 1991 until 1997, and during this time was very active, working in a group which revised the Novice Formation Notes, and in 1997 worked on simplified Formation notes for Papua New Guinea.

In 1992 and 1993 he and Joyce visited and encouraged Tertiaries in Singapore, southern Malaysia and Kuching.

I encourage you to look him up in the index at the back of *Franciscan Gold!*

On returning from Scotland, David and Joyce had reconnected with Jean Frost and her husband, old friends from their early days. Sadly, Joyce suffered from dementia for many years and died in January 2016. Whilst caring for Joyce, David was supported by Jean who was caring for her husband who was also suffering from dementia. In December of 2016 David and Jean married and have spent the last five years very happily together.

David died, very suddenly, on September 9. Jean’s son, Jonathan, in his Tribute on behalf of the family, described David’s life as one of humble service and will be remembered not so much by what he said, but by the pattern of his life.

The Asia-Pacific Province of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis has much to be grateful to David for. We give thanks for his life and pray that he now rests in peace, good and faithful servant.

If you would like to view the Service of Thanksgiving for David’s life, you can find it at <https://youtu.be/WQPY2mB2xtc>

Franciscan Day by Day December 25

The Celtic Tradition

Let us weigh wisely, let us wonder at
Wonders accomplished,
Nothing more wondrous than this world ever
will men’s lips tell of,
God coming to us, he that created
All of creation,
As God and as man, and God as a man,
Equally gifted.

Tremendous, tiny, powerful, feeble,
Cheeks fair of colour,
Wealthy and needy, Father and Brother,
Maker of brothers,
This, surely, is Jesus, whom we should welcome
As Lord of rulers,
Lofty and lowly, Emmanuel,
Honey to think on.
An ox and an ass, the Lord of this world,
A manger is his,
Bundle of hay instead of a cradle
For our Lord of hosts.



EDITOR WANTED

For information, please contact
Revd Mandy Wheatley, (Provincial Minister)
On 0401670132 or email
mmjcwheatley@bigpond.com

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am writing to advise that I have stepped down as Editor. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking David White, John Blakemore and Roselind Ruwoldt for their assistance during this time. It has been a rewarding and humbling journey.

I also want to thank all those members who have contributed articles in making this knitting in community a vehicle of communication.

For the new Editor, I would be happy to assist you in your transition.

Blessings and Peace,
Gloria



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The Third Order, Society of St Francis's
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<https://tssf.org.au>

Go to forms and payments, then to
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Greetings Brothers and Sisters tssf,
Your annual subscription to Third Order - Asia-Pacific Province for the year 2022 is now due for all novices and professed.

Chapter asks that subs be paid by 31st March 2022.

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Jane Noller tssf, Provincial Treasurer.

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