



Newsletter for the Province of Asia-Pacific

The Third Order, Society of St Francis

www.tssf.org.au

Easter 2022

From jaded to joy

**Mandy Wheatley,
Provincial Minister**

Dear sisters and brothers,

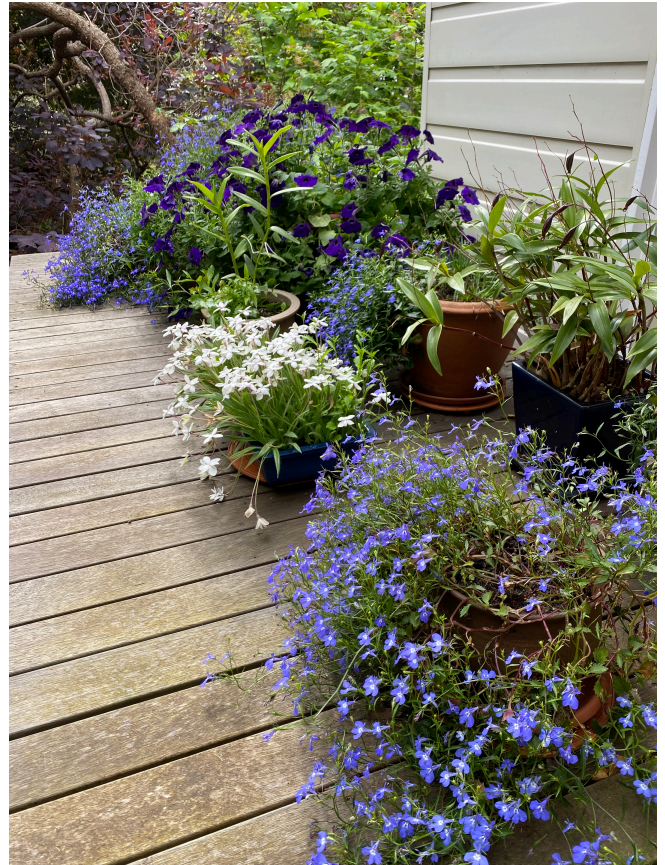
This long season living with Covid has left many of us feeling somewhat jaded, to say the least.

Jesus says: ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’ (Matt 11.28). Pause a moment and take a deep breath.

Jesus continues: ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’ (v.29,30) As usual, Jesus is turning our expectations upside down. By bearing our crosses with Him, our penitential lives of suffering can paradoxically be joyful and light.

Understanding this principle, Francis called for us to be a Penitential Order and our Manual instructs us to hold a Holy Day of Penitence (F4) near Palm Sunday.

Ted Witham said: ‘The purpose of being an Order of Penitents is not to remain in the grovel position before God. We contritely acknowledge how sin has sundered us from God, we confess our sinfulness, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And God gives forgiveness as a wonderful gift. Forgiveness is a package, a bundling together of three great gifts. When



Joy in the Garden, by Sandra Jackson

God forgives you and me, God grants us: joy, freedom and the power to do good.’ (Adapted from the Easter Newsletter 2007).

Francis described ‘Perfect joy’ to Brother Leo this way: ‘If we bear all [these] injuries with patience and joy, thinking of the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, which we would share out of love for him, write, O Brother Leo, that here, finally, is perfect joy.’ (<https://www.francislittleassisi.com/the-joy-of-saint-francis>)

Ways I have found joy in Covid times

Practising gratitude: Finding things for which we can thank God in these years of Covid delights me. It can bring spontaneous laughter or tears. What are you grateful for?

Regular Prayer: Preparation for YouTube 'Daily Prayer' brings me great joy. It's like baking bread daily for the family. The stories of the Saints, sharing the beauty of creation and wonderful music gives great delight to me. How do you like to praise God? Here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/bdd72b6x>

Third Order Community – keeping in touch: Receiving by email 'The Franciscan' from the UK, gives me joy. Contact: Franciscan Subscriptions Secretary, SSF, Email: passf@franciscans.org.uk. Our Region prays together on Thursdays via Zoom with Evening Prayer and Community Obedience. How do you keep in touch with your Franciscan family?

Power to do good – one small act of kindness at a time: 'We probably can't end modern slavery in the world... But we can get one family out, can't we?' a statement by Gary Haugen, an official sent into Rwanda after the genocide in 1994. Podcast: <https://katebowler.com/podcasts/gary-haugen-joy-is-the-oxygen/>

I have resolved to complete one unfinished craft project at a time and give each away as a personal gift of encouragement. What kindness can you show to someone today?

What brings you joy as a Franciscan following Jesus? Please contact me at (Mobile) 0401 670 132 or email:

mmjwheatley@bigpond.com if you would like more information about the links mentioned or have ones of your own that you enjoy.

May the joy of the Lord be your strength this Lent and Easter Season.

New editor:

God has indeed blessed us with Jan Down stepping into the role of Newsletter Editor. Welcome Jan, thank you for answering God's call. We continue to give thanks for Gloria Malouf-Marsh our retiring Editor of 12 years.

May you both be blessed in your new ventures.

Tertiaries and aspirants 'own' this Newsletter, so I appeal to everyone to write a thoughtful Franciscan contribution once a year. It doesn't have to be an article; perhaps a prayer, poem or quote.

Regional Ministers and Area Convenors could write a paragraph, with photographs of gatherings, or some aspect of Franciscan life discussed at a regional meeting.

Thank you and bless everyone who answers God's call to be creative.

Mandy tssf
Minister Province



Notices and dates

For the Third Order to consider and pray about:

- The Day of Penitence is to be observed in our Regions on or near the Friday before Palm Sunday – Manual F4.
- With thanksgiving for the faithful leadership of our steadfast Regional Ministers who have served their regions well, we are calling for nominations in April for Regional Ministers in 2022 to replace:
Graham Miller QLD A
Roselind Ruwoldt SA
Colin Valentine VIC/TAS
Keith Slater QLD B / NNSW
- For those considering this honourable calling or those praying please read the Manual K6 and K8.
- Calling for Chapter agenda items to be sent to John Blakemore: TSSF Provincial Secretary (provincial.secretary@tssf.org.au)
Our Province's Chapter Meeting – 7 May by Zoom
- The General Synod of Australian Bishops – 8-13 May (Mandy and Brother Christopher John will be serving as Chaplains – please pray for us)
- Pray for someone to explore the position of Lifelong Learning Coordinator for post-formation of Tertiaries.
- Pray for our PNG sisters and brothers in the TSSF who have difficulties contacting us and are still in the midst of the Covid19 crisis with little medical assistance.

Inspired to live simply

Anne Wilson
Regional Minister, WA

St Andrews in Subiaco is a beautiful red brick church with modern stained-glass windows and, we were told, also boasts a wonderful pipe organ, which makes it an attractive venue for music performances. Our group photograph is in front of the organ.

As we gathered on 12th February this year, the Rector, Fr Peter Manuel, made us very welcome and we were introduced to Glyn, a fellow Franciscan traveller from St Andrew's parish, who had been a Society of St Francis brother quite some time ago. He had made himself known when Lloyd renewed his vows during a Sunday evening service. We were all delighted to meet him and Glyn made a special effort to remember all our names. We look forward to meeting him again sometime.

We were very grateful that Fr Peter generously offered to celebrate the Eucharist for us on his day off. This was also the first time we have been hosted by Lloyd at his home church, having taken advantage of a small window of opportunity between his two parish placements and after his CPE module.

Lloyd also bravely agreed to share a reflection on the principle of the day, 'To live Simply'. It's quite a challenge for any of us to talk on this topic, but Lloyd was able to share how his understanding of living simply is growing, and how he expresses this within his own life of family, community and work. We were each inspired to grow in our commitments to live simply.

After the Eucharist, we met to share news of each other and to discuss concerns and issues in our region. I appreciated being able to draw on the wisdom and maturity of our community as I try to be true to their support of me as Regional Minister.



*Back L-R: Steve Charles; Lloyd De Souza; Rector of St Andrew's Parish, Father Peter Manuel (back turned); Jeremy James; Glyn Marillier
Front L-R: Pam Rose, Bev Antipas, Anne Wilson, Ruth Harrison. Ken Wilson was taking the photograph.*

In the group meeting after lunch, we usually invite someone to prepare a topic for discussion. In this way we benefit from all the gifts and experiences of all our brothers and sisters. However, this time, we had a sharing time around the Franciscan 'Gathering Cards'. These cards are modelled on the Cursillo Fourth Day meeting cards and were introduced to me by Keith Slater. We have trialled them three times so far and each time we have had very stimulating discussions and have been able to help each other along the way.

The cards are very easy to print and use and it takes the pressure off the Area Convenor to find a speaker when everyone is busy.

As a postscript; we have had our share of personal griefs, suffering and loss but I am always heartened by our efforts to support and encourage each other, particularly in prayer, by phone calls and lifts to meetings. It is not easy to do any of these things, but the blessings abound to us all. Ken, as Area Convenor and Selina as Prayer Co-ordinator are key to keeping our community connected. Jenny makes and sends birthday cards, so no-one is left out.

Translating the Principles for a friend

Tony Poon

Hong Kong

I grew up in a Chinese Church and came into contact with the tssf only in recent years. I was attracted to it and was professed a member in October 2021.

Praying the community obedience in the context of the daily office became an essential part of my daily life. The portion of the Principles of tssf set out in the prayer cycle inspires, encourages and gives me comfort in trying to live out the Franciscan way.

These texts from time to time came out inadvertently during my conversation with brothers and sisters in my church and one of them was particularly inspired by the passage on humility (day 24) and enquired. He wanted to know more, and so, over a period of three days, I had all 31 passages translated into Chinese for him.

He appeared moved by their contents. The following is my translation of the passage for day 24. The full translation can be found under 'About US' at: <https://tssf.org.au/>.

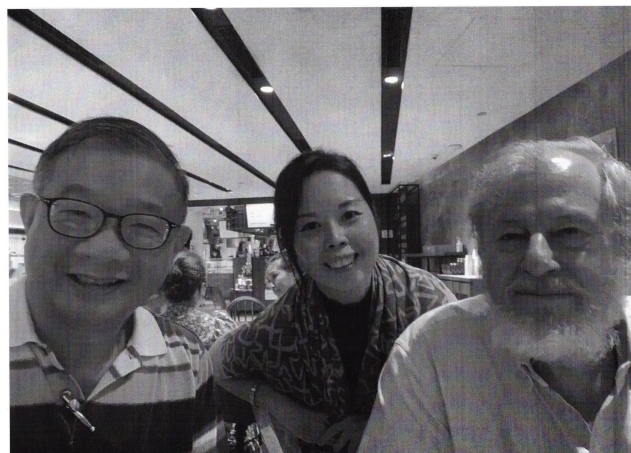
Peace and all good,
Tony

Stroud Parish Vacant

St John's Parish, Stroud, NSW is vacant. It is currently being served by an interim locum, but he will soon be moving to other duties.

The parish is being offered on a house for duty basis and would be ideal for a recently retired or about to retire priest. Parish duties are only a few days per week.

<https://www.newcastleanglican.org.au/your-church/stroud/>.



Tony Poon (left) and John Davison with a friend from EFM

Day 24 of the Principles in Cantonese

第二十四天

謙虛（三段的最後一段）

察覺到他人有過失，我們為他祈禱而不是批評。我們留意移除自己眼中的樑木而不是他人眼中的刺。受到邀請，我們主動隨時接受最低下的位置。當我們被邀請擔當自己認為不配或者能力不及的事工的時候，我們不以謙卑為理由而推辭，而是滿有信心地盡力而為，深信上主的大能，在我們軟弱的時候更加彰。

Tony Poon



The parish is small but there's a very committed and active core – and the historic church and rectory are in good order.

There's an added extra in the Franciscan community at the nearby Hermitage and also involvement in helping manage the old Monastery as a place for hospitality and spirituality.

If anyone is interested I'd be happy to help. Christopher John SSF:

christopherjohnssf@gmail.com

Connecting, reflecting

Colin Valentine

Regional Minister, Vic/Tas

As with many other regions, 2021 continued to be very topsy turvy with the impact that Covid19 had on our ability to meet physically. However, we once again embraced technology and were able to maintain our connection through having Zoom get togethers!

During 2021 two special events took place by Zoom. On Saturday, 21 Aug 2021, Cecilia Francis from Melbourne was noviced and then on Saturday, 2 Oct 2021, Sue Ball from Hobart was professed via Zoom. It was a special time for Sue as originally the plan was for her to be professed at our Retreat in Cheltenham, but due to Covid lockdowns this became a Zoom meeting. We were able to include the placing of Sue's profession cross through a symbolic gesture as I had posted the cross to her beforehand.



Mary Wilson and Colin Valentine

It has also been a privilege to be able to visit both Mary Wilson in Ballarat and Helen Granowski in Hawthorn during 2021. Sandra Jackson and I have always enjoyed our times together visiting both Mary and Helen.

Our meeting program for 2022 will also include Zoom meetings as this has enabled people to get together across the kilometres and across Bass Strait (without catching a boat, a plane or swimming).



Balnarring Gathering, L-R: The Rev'd Mandy Wheatley, Sandra Jackson, Sue Chapman, the Rev'd Pirrial Clift, Colin Valentine, David Harvey, Chris Winkett, Tanya Harvey, Catherine De Ron, Jan Down, Michael Down, the Rev'd Kieron Jones

The first meeting this year was held in February at my home church, St Mark's Balnarring. The Rev'd Keiron Jones, recently commissioned as the parish's priest in charge, celebrated the Eucharist for us and gave us a wonderful homily, which included, 'You who are committed to living out the charism of St Francis are daily encouraged to assume attitudes of the heart and mind and spirit that are life-giving and life-affirming, not just for yourselves but for those around you and our world... As you live out your Rule of Life, may God bless you abundantly. And may the Christ light that you bring to the world continue to shine, especially where light is so needed.'

After a shared lunch we reflected on material provided by Common Grace in its live-streamed 'Change the Heart Prayer Service', again held on the evening before 26th January 2022. One of the ways suggested for how to join in prayer and action with Common Grace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice in 2022 is to learn about and speak up on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

We reflected on how we as Franciscans can respond to this issue as we seek 'to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all' (Day 7 – The Second Aim in our Principles). We also invited those who were not able to join us due to distance to think about this too.

Serving in the community



Victorian tertiary, Barry Cledsmith (crucifer) with the Rev'd Colleen Clayton, at the blessing of the new premises for the parish op shop of St Matthew's, Cheltenham in Melbourne

Quote Corner

Jesus shows us what God is like

'No words can possibly hold, nor reflect the reality of who God is. God is infinite, an infinity that goes beyond the utter vastness of our universe.

People have always wondered and asked questions about the reality we call "God" such as whether the sacred is one being or many, and how we human beings stand in relationship to the sacred. These questions have often been accompanied with fear and uncertainty. It is Jesus who provides us with images and thoughts on which to ground our belief in God. God cares; God is compassionate; God is always ready to pardon; we are to walk without fear in relationship to God. And because we believe with Jesus that we share in the life of God, we are called to let that divine life flow through us. So Jesus gives us one command: to love as he loved; for he loved like God, compassionate, not judging, not condemning, and giving his life in love for the sake of others.'

From: Morwood, Michael, *God is With Us. Reflections for Sundays Years A, B and C.* Spectrum Publication 1994. P151 (Luke 6: 36-38)

Contributed by Sandra Beck

A name for our newsletter?

From the editor

There's *Franciscan Angles* (SSF), *Franciscan Times* (TSSF Province of the Americas), *Tau* (TSSF in the Pacific) and many others – so what about a name for our newsletter? If you have any suggestions, or other contributions, please send them to: editor@tssf.org.au. **The deadline for the next issue is 29th April.**

It is a delight and a privilege to take up the role of editor. Thank you to Gloria, the previous editor, who has been very helpful and encouraging in the handover; to Mandy Wheatley and others who have also been so supportive as I learn; and to all who have contributed to this edition.

As of November 2020, Michael and I live in Sale, Gippsland, in the south east corner of Victoria. After decades in Melbourne, it is wonderful to be a five minute bike ride to where I can see cows and horses in the paddocks, ducks on the river, and sometimes pelicans down at the Port of Sale.

We have been tertiaries since the 1990s and still learning what it means to follow Jesus in the company of Francis and Clare.

I am inspired especially by Francis' JOY in knowing, loving and serving God, his commitment to simplicity and his incredible single-mindedness in living out the gospel.

As we pray for peace in Ukraine and for all people affected by natural disasters, including the recent floods in north-eastern Australia, may we also know the ultimate peace and joy of the risen Lord.

Jan Down

Pelican at the Port of Sale



Hong Kong dreaming

John Davison, normally resident in Hong Kong, but stuck in Brisbane, imagines writing to an old friend, now in the UK:

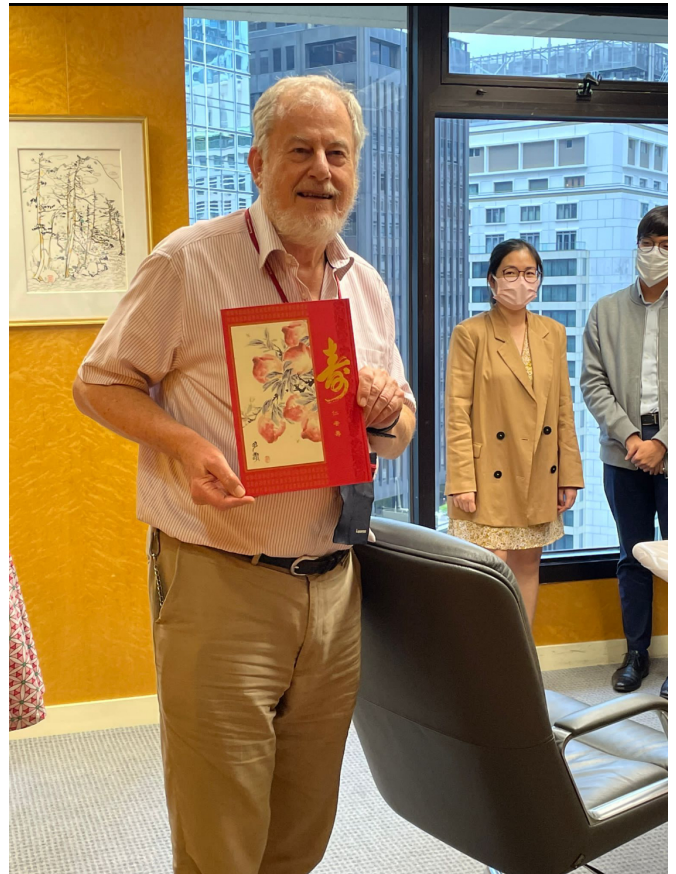
Dear Mike,

Kung Hei Fat Choy! Yes it's the first day of Chinese New Year (CNY) and I've spent all morning sending off greeting texts to friends in Hong Kong and round the world. It's 13 degrees in Hong Kong and a heatwave in Brisbane with the thermometer on my back stoop showing 35 degrees – in the shade.

I'm stuck here because all flights from Australia to Hong Kong are banned for the moment because of Covid. Hong Kong is in its fifth wave of Covid and Australia is a hot spot. This forced interlude has given me a good opportunity to meet some Brisbane tertiaries and to put some perspective on what's been happening in Hong Kong and my own 50 years there this year.

The first day of CNY is *bai nian* when people visit their elderly relatives, greet friends and give red *lai see* packets to unmarried children and friends. They would have had reunion dinners for one side of the family last night and reunion dinners tonight for the other side of the family.

It will be more subdued this year because restaurants are mandatorily closed for dinner so the dinners will have to be at home. Covid has bitten very hard and the political and social events of the last three years have left Hong Kong a wounded city. Families and friends are divided from each other politically, the 'yellow' camp, those supporting the democracy movement v the 'blue', who



John Davison celebrating a birthday in Hong Kong

support the Hong Kong Government and the police.

People are leaving in droves and the future to many looks very bleak.

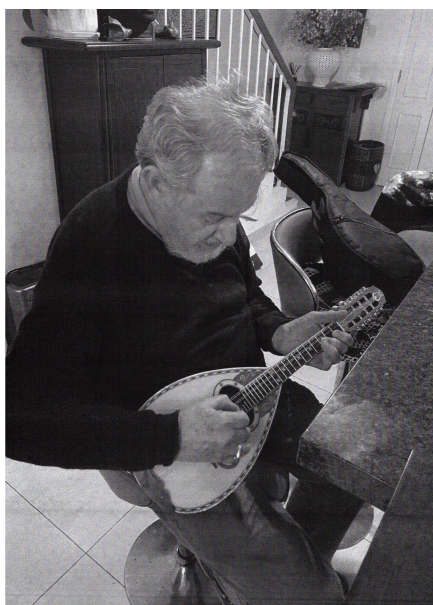
There is such widespread distrust of the Government now that vaccination rates, especially for the elderly and the young, are low. They are not the anti-vaxers we are familiar with. It's nothing to do with ideology. It's all a matter of trust. This brings me to the main cause of this distrust – the riots in 2019 and the way the Government handled them.

You wrote to me during the riots complaining about the police brutality you were reading about and seeing on TV in the UK. I wrote back angrily complaining that the world press was not giving a true picture. The police were acting with great constraint compared with police anti-riot squads in other countries. The police in Hong Kong hadn't killed anybody and there were more injuries amongst the police than amongst the rioters.

And those who were killed were killed by the rioters. There were scenes of horrific violence shown unedited on TV.

That nearly destroyed our friendship, didn't it? I must say that Tony Poon, one of our Hong Kong professed tertiaries, and a retired senior Hong Kong police officer, disagrees with me and is ashamed of his former colleagues.

The truth is that there were bad and violent people on both sides. The police were mostly just trying to do their job and the rioters were not all heroes standing up courageously for democracy (which was never part of the deal with China anyway) and freedom in the face of an oppressive Government.



John Davison in Brisbane

In the beginning there was general support for the protesters amongst people like me but once they sacked the Legislative Council building most of us turned away from them and it wasn't long before protesters became rioters and some became thugs. There were rumours that the core were being paid daily and supported by certain people in Hong Kong, the US and even China itself, by anti-Xi forces.

All that followed – including the National Security Law (NSL) and the 'reform' of the Legislative Council which has driven out all the people China deems not 'patriotic' – in the view of many, the rioters brought upon themselves, and us. It has only worsened the plight of the poor and disadvantaged.

Even though we now have the equivalent of a one party parliament and the senior Government officials now regularly sprinkle their speech with phrases such as their equivalents in China use, I firmly believe that Hong Kong will survive, but with less character and excitement. The traditional Chinese immigrant Lion Rock spirit of 'get up and go' is in danger of expiring. The future will look different. Just as busy but different. So far religious freedom hasn't been threatened but there are worrying signs that it may be.

With the police enforcing the NSL with enthusiasm, we look askance even at the constable on the beat.

And people like me who have long considered themselves as *heung gong yan*? It will break my heart if I have to go and leave a people whom I have learned to love and admire.

But enough of this – what the Aussies here call a 'rant'. It's all still so very close, and continuing to be reflected in daily life in Hong Kong, that it's hard to get away from.

All this has reminded me of the early days in Hong Kong when Sandra and I arrived in 1972 with an 11 week old baby to work in the Hong Kong Government but charged with the task by Brother Geoffrey, then Minister General of SSF, to establish a Third Order group amongst Chinese Anglicans...

John's story of the early days of the Third Order in Hong Kong will be continued in the next issue.

A Prayer for Peace

For those who are fleeing: sanctuary

For those who are staying: safety

For those who are fighting: peace

For those whose hearts are breaking: comfort