



Newsletter for the Province of Asia-Pacific

Third Order, Society of Saint Francis

www.tssf.org.au

Francistide 2023

Trust is the way to freedom in God

**Mandy Wheatley,
Provincial Minister**

**Happy Francistide dear
sisters and brothers!!**



'Knit Together' was created by Elizabeth Corah tssf. See instructions, page S1 online, or phone 0405 714 168.

(And for those who enjoy a pun – may 'the fourth' be with you!)

This season, celebrated by the Franciscan family from 17th September to 4th October, is called Francistide. During this time the community reflects on the gift of Francis' stigmata in 1224 and his faithful death in 1226 when he was 44 years old. We celebrate the revelation of these signs of unity with Christ and remember his confidence that Sister Death would carry him home to Christ.

The Anglican Church also embraces Francistide with the 'Season of Creation', this year's theme being 'Let Justice and Peace flow'.

Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio writes: *"To trust in the power of God's grace through darkness, isolation, bitterness, and rejection [as Francis did] is...the way to freedom in God. For prayer, that deep relationship of God breathing in us, requires change and conversion. And where there is change, there is the letting go of the old and the giving birth to the new. To pray is to be open to the new, to the future in God. The way to life passes through change and ultimately the change from death to life.*

Prayer is the way to life because in prayer we are invited to change and to grow in love.” [Ilia Delio, *Franciscan Prayer* (Franciscan Media: 2004), 28.]

May Francis’ Feast Day on October 4th intensify our commitment to follow Christ in the way of the poor man of Assisi.

With blessings of peace and goodwill,
Mandy tssf, (Provincial Minister, Asia-Pacific)

Notices: A face-to-face Chapter was held at the Stroud Monastery in June. Here are some updates.

In September, Sally Buckley, Hyeran Yang and I visit England for IPTOC (Inter Provincial Third Order Chapter).

2023 Professions: David Mason (QLD B/N NSW); Prue Skinner (NSW B/ACT); Andrew MacIntyre (NSW B/ACT); Anne Wentzel (NSW B/ACT); Cecilia Francis (VIC/TAS); Kyongok Monica Park (S Korea); Sungsoon Lucy Edward Lee (S Korea); Stephen Charles (WA); Bron Frost (NSW A).

Change of Address: Sandra Beck: PO Box 57 Hamilton NSW 2303.

Requests for release: Lahdo Soner (QLD B/N NSW); Andrew Stocker (VIC/TAS); Christine Duke (WA); Tanya Harvey (VIC/TAS).

O God, you made your Church rich through the poverty of blessed Francis. Help us, who remember his death, not to trust in earthly things but to seek your heavenly gifts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

New Annual Report form

To encourage all tertiaries to be reflective about their Franciscan journey and to help them develop ongoing lifelong formation, the Annual Report to be completed by 15th November this year includes an extra question: ‘4. Reflect on your Franciscan learning (ongoing formation) during the last year.’ This is intended to be a brief summary, not an extensive report.

It is an extension from Day 31 of the Community Obedience, when we are asked to reflect on the portion of the Rule that has particularly encouraged or challenged us during the month. The new report form (both the online and print versions) can be found at:

<https://tssf.org.au/annual-report/>

If you have moved or need to update your contact details, you can do so on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/398hf8uh> or contact David, our Communications Officer.



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www.franciscans.org.uk

Just picked up this newsletter? Find out more about the Third Order at:
<https://tssf.org.au/>

A letter from PNG

Rita Simeni tssf

THANK YOU and greetings from TSSF members of Popondetta and Dogura Regions in PNG.

Firstly, our thanks to the Provincial Chapter members who tirelessly work, committing their time, energy, knowledge, gifts, resources, and your prayers. Thank you to your families and the Australian TSSF members who support you in your work. So in Asia-Pacific Province the work is growing and you are also connecting us with International Sisters and Brothers sharing in the same work.

Secondly, thank you to the Minister General of the First Order Brothers, Brother Christopher John for making the arrangement for our Provincial Minister Mandy to travel with him to Popondetta and come to us. What a great joy in meeting the two Ministers.

Brother Christopher John and P.M. Mandy coming to us has taught us to work together helping each other, especially in the Popondetta Region.

Thirdly, thank you to Mandy Wheatley for your Visit of Introduction to us, and to the Chapter Members who supported us with finance to look after our Minister. Mandy you have a beautiful way of linking yourself with people in PNG and TSSF Members. You preached about God, St. Francis and your position in such thoughtful greetings, hearing stories, listening, and praying with people while standing around, sitting or walking past, everything about you speaking of the Gospel of Christ. People were expressing their joy and pain, sharing tears and praying together.

During your one-day visit to my home parish in Kokoda, Holy Trinity met my thoughts speaking to my heart before God: "Let Mandy feel your presence in my parish ground." As we left my parish, Mandy said to me; "I felt the presence of God here." I truly believe that God doesn't forget His parishioners' prayers, request and petitions. The secret of prayer connection between God and the person. Thank you for sharing your joy and prayer with TSSF Members of Popondetta and Dogura Regions.

I would personally like to thank Mandy and Glenys for raising me up from my sick bed to be on the plane to Alotau with no ifs and buts. It was all to do with prayers for my inner healing and the prayers of many others. Thank you to Brother Christopher for getting me on the WhatsApp with Mandy. Obedience was important whether I looked ugly or pretty, being sick. Thank you to Bishop Godfrey challenging the Popondetta Region on St Francis, walking fifteen kilometres to Bishop Kopapa to rescue our members and the work of St. Francis.

Thank you to Colin Fidock for going through the hardship of getting a laptop for Bishop Joe to use to communicate.

Lastly, thank you to all of you who pray for us as we do for you. May the Spirit of Francis remain in us always and may our joys be complete.



Why pray?

Pirrial Clift tssf

Somewhere within every human being is a place which defies scientific measurement or analysis. In that secret, sacred place a voice whispers invitingly, gently, constantly: calling us home to God.

Why do we pray? Human prayer is always a response to God, who initiates all prayer; who stands patiently, holding open the door of Life for us; whose longing for us is eternal.

Every Christian is invited to take the mystical path, to journey into God *'As you Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us'*, said Jesus. *'Put on Christ'* as St Paul put it. The Way home into God is via prayer.

Why do we pray? Spontaneous prayer arises out of our depths when some liminal event awakens a primeval recognition that there is some being or force greater than human knowledge or strength at work in the world, and we lose ourselves in wonder, praise or thanksgiving; or call urgently for help.

Why do we pray? As God's children we believe God cares for our needs – perhaps sick relatives or personal anxieties – and so we progressively build up trust, grow in faith, confirm and strengthen our relationship.

Why do we pray? Jesus prayed before announcing the Twelve; in the Garden awaiting his captors; alone in deserted places; when healing the sick... Jesus is our example in everything. He left us with the Lord's Prayer, and encouraged persistence in prayer. The Scriptures exhort us to pray without ceasing. The church in Collossae was urged to *'Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving'*.

Why do we pray? We pray in community with others: praising and thanking God, interceding for Church and world, hearing God's word opened up to us. Prayerfully we receive the sacraments of Christ's body and blood, remembering his sacrificial love. Our souls drink up God's word thirstily and are nourished by the sacraments so that we are better able to walk the narrow way.

Why do we pray? As we gradually relinquish our need for control, and surrender to God, giving ourselves into service: as we struggle to die to ourselves and live for God; as the false self begins to peel away and the *real me* begins timidly to emerge from the ego shell in which it hides... we need help – the kind of help that only God can give. So we pray our way along the Way of self-giving and self-knowledge, step by tiny step.



The Spirit leads, we listen and follow. Prayer is our life-line.

Why do we pray? Because we are human and fallible and weak and sinful and sometimes do very stupid things. Often, actually. Having seen the kindness in God's eyes before, we return again, begging for forgiveness and the courage to do the right thing.

Why do we pray? Life can be hard; sometimes we are lonely and need a friend. Or sadness and grief threaten to engulf us. There are times of confusion and doubt or occasions when we feel lost or betrayed. As we travel with Jesus we experience his willingness to share our sorrows and burdens; to console and comfort our aching hearts and suffer with us, due to his great love.

Why do we pray when God appears absent? *'Why have you abandoned me?'* we cry. We long for the companionship and comfort we enjoyed before. The light is out, the darkness thick and black. It's cold, and we are desolate. God's voice is silent – yet the silence speaks; encouraging us to love God for God's own sake, not for what God gives us. What else can we do but pray and trust the Word of God? Where else can we go? Who else has the words of eternal life?

Why do we pray? The more often we hear God's voice through scripture, meditate on Jesus' life, love, death, and resurrection or sit peaceably together with him in silence, the deeper grows our love. We pray because we love the Lord our God with all our heart and all our soul, all our mind and all our strength; and we want to be with God.

Why do a tree's roots burrow into the earth? Why does a magpie sing?
Why does the river rush into the sea?
Prayer for a human being is as natural as breathing.



The Rev Pirrial Clift tssf

Newsletter update – New look, new length, and maybe a new name?

'Knit Together' has been suggested as a name for our newsletter.
What do you think? Please send your thoughts on this possible name to JanDown: jeidown@protonmail.com Thank you!

New look, new online length

If you are reading this newsletter online, you will notice that there are four extra pages. These pages are being reserved for book reviews reflections, prayers and anything that is not topical news. Keeping the printed copies to eight pages will save on postage, while everyone will still be able to read all the latest Provincial news.

The new look to the page design is still experimental and part of trying out a different layout program.

Rosemary Bradford tssf

Janet Long
Regional Minister, NSW A

We recently mourned the loss but celebrated the life of Rosemary Bradford, a long time sister of the NSW A Sydney group of the tertiaries. Professed in 1990, Rosemary was a faithful supporter of the group, both practically and in faithful prayer, and we will miss her tremendous energy and love.

Her funeral was held at St Andrew's Cathedral in the heart of Sydney on Friday 12th May. Every seat was taken, both in the nave and the gallery, and people stood in the aisles and doorways. The singing nearly lifted the roof! In addition, the service was live-streamed so people from further afield could join in. It was a true testimony to how much Rosemary was loved and how many lives she had touched.

After the funeral, the SSF community met outside (see photo). The celebration of Rosemary's life continued at Golden Grove, the Healing Ministry Centre of the Cathedral which she supported for many years, and of which she was a founding member.

Two lovely emails that were sent after the funeral to our NSW A group are shared below. The first from **Ian Randall tssf**, her son-in-law:

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It was such a delight to see so many of you at Rosemary's funeral. It was such a wonderful celebration of her life. The great multitude that gathered realised in shocked amazement what we all meant to her. Nobody had any idea ... how could one person hold so many in her heart?

I know that it was nearly impossible to keep up with Rosemary as the energy required could only be met by the most in-form Olympic athlete. My own children needed to think very carefully if they were up to spending a weekend with her. Even the promise of a quiet 'sit around' would become a maelstrom of adventure.

Some of us had put it down to her kidney transplant and the strange cases where the personality of the organ donor becomes part of the recipient. We had joked that her kidney must have belonged to a fast riding dare-devil motorcyclist. But those who have known her for a long time know she had always lived life at full throttle!

Rosemary led me to the TSSF as I have always struggled to find a church community. I have always been frustrated by the neo-conservative-Sydney-Evangelical movement that my own Christian





From left to right: Julie Blakemore, Cathy Mathews, Mandy Wheatley, Jill Gumbley, Rosemary Christmas, Brother Alfred, David Masters, Paul Hawker, Ian Randall, Tony Camenzuli, John Blakemore, Jane Noller, Brother Bruce-Paul, [another attendee].

friends belong to and the TSSF was a place I could find a sense of belonging. I now realise that Rosemary led many of us to the TSSF.

I kept my tongue in check before I gave my reading as I had been tempted to reflect on the passage... Jesus was so loving to Thomas; he was clearly being an idiot and Jesus was calling on all of his divine powers from smiting Thomas on the spot. On many occasions, when I had been like Thomas before Jesus, Rosemary was so loving towards me – no doubt she would rather have given me a rightful clobbering!

Seeing you all yesterday was such a great joy. Many of us reflected how C-19 had affected our community and the Zoom had taken so much away – yet there is a renewed spirit to rebuild our Franciscan community and it was Rosemary who had called us all together again. Rosemary has blessed us and has made us a blessing to one another.

Cathy Mathews tssf, writing on the 16th May:

‘Knit together in community and prayer.’ As I open my prayer cycle this morning and see Rosemary’s smiling face looking out at us, and realize the reading reflects her devotion to prayer which was such a part of her daily life, I feel most humbled. To find also that there are special prayers for African provinces, knowing she was raised in Africa is more than a coincidence. Rosemary understood the needs of the marginalized better than anyone I’ve known. I gather with you all this morning in prayer for her, and our wider community, in deep gratitude for knowing and learning from Rosemary and in the comfort of our being together on Friday.

My trolley

**Gemma Le Mesurier tssf,
NSW B / ACT**

With inflation and the increase in cost of, well, everything, I have been getting intentional about my grocery shopping. No longer can I afford to wander around the store putting things in my trolley at will. I have started meal planning, making a shopping list, putting the items in the supermarket's online ordering system and seeing what the total price is. If it is over my allocated budget, I remove things, sometimes even altering my meal plan to have cheaper meals on the menu that week.

I have tried click-and-collect, but the supermarkets have to bag all fresh produce, so instead of putting the order through online, I use it as a shopping list and go in-store.

The sense of restriction that this budget is enforcing is having surprising effects on my mindset. Rather than feeling poorer, I am feeling more grateful for every single thing in my trolley. It means no veggies are being left to languish in the crisper drawers. By the time the new week comes, the cupboard is bare. Every item has been consumed and, what's more, appreciated.

Food waste is a significant contributor to climate change. If food is unconsumed, all the energy used in its growth, harvesting and transporting is wasted, and if it goes to the tip, where it is often enclosed in a plastic bin bag and then buried under other rubbish, it cannot break down naturally and so releases methane gas. Food waste is not only bad for our environment; it also is irresponsible in a world where many don't have enough.

Finding ways to reduce the food that ends up in the bin is a small thing we can do that pays dividends for the environment. Composting is obviously valuable, but, as with most things we end up owning, working out how to dispose of things responsibly is secondary to being aware of what is coming into our homes in the first place, and making sure it is only what we actually need.



Editor: What is your story? Could you write for this page on care for creation in crisis? I suggest about 300 words plus a photo if possible (at least 1MB please). Thank you!

Due-date for next issue: 27/10 (earlier if possible)

Please send contributions to: jeidown@protonmail.com

Franciscan Spirituality

Brother Ramon

Reviewed by Frances Hansen tssf

This book introduces us to the world of St Francis and his first followers, who discovered the joy and wonder of Jesus alive in their midst. It is a book that invites us into that same reality today.

Brother Ramon's writing cuts through and makes connections between mysticism, the world, its ecology and God's relationship within it and with all people. It reveals a way forward for our world, desperate for reconciliation and restoration that is free and joyful for everyone. It engenders trust and co-operation through the distinct Franciscan charisms of Simplicity and Poverty. These promote detachment from the materialism of the world and attachment to gospel values of living simply and simply loving as Jesus did.

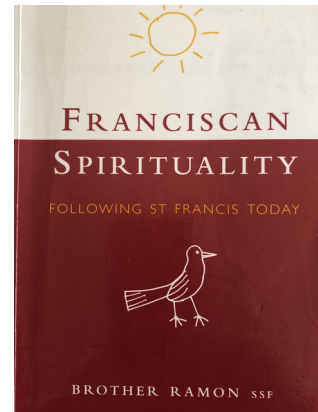
Brother Ramon's book begins with the story of how Francesco Bernadone, born in Assisi in Umbrian Italy in 1182, became the St Francis we know today as the patron saint of birds and animals. However, the book progresses on to reveal more of the true depth and breadth of Francis' relationship with God in how he experienced and recognised God through and in all of God's creation. He is easily accepted among other faiths as the Saint of Environment and Ecology.

Brother Ramon explains beautifully the connection between the sanctity of God's natural world and how we may be drawn to compassionate response in the same way Francis did to where and how the world and its people are hurting. This he did by entering into the deeply transformative power of relationship with God and discovery of God's compassionate and personal love for each one and for all of Creation. Like St Francis before us, we begin to see, hear and respond humbly to the cries of the poor and the earth. As Jesus also does.

Included in this book are many of St Francis' lyric prayers, poems and prose which reveal the artistic, joyful wonder at God's world. This still offers a freshness that gives voice to our deep need to praise God in all things and in all of life's experiences..

This is a book worth reading again and again, as each reading reveals new insights. For this reason it is my first choice for an enquirer into TSSF. One of the things I love about it is the inclusion of Brother Ramon's prayers at the end of each chapter. Chapter 12 'Franciscan Praying' ends with this prayer:

*God our loving Father:
Our hearts are cold until warmed by your Holy Spirit, and
our prayers lifeless until imbued with your sacred fire;
Stir us up to prayer and action, that our words and lives
may incarnate the love of Christ;
For your praise and our world's good. Amen.*



In the Midst of Much-Doing: Cultivating a Missional Spirituality

by Charles Ringma tssf

Published by Langham Global, 2023

Reviewed by Gordon Preece

Charles Ringma brings his astute theological mind, big heart for the lost, vast missional experience, and quest for a sustainable missional spirituality together in this brilliant book.

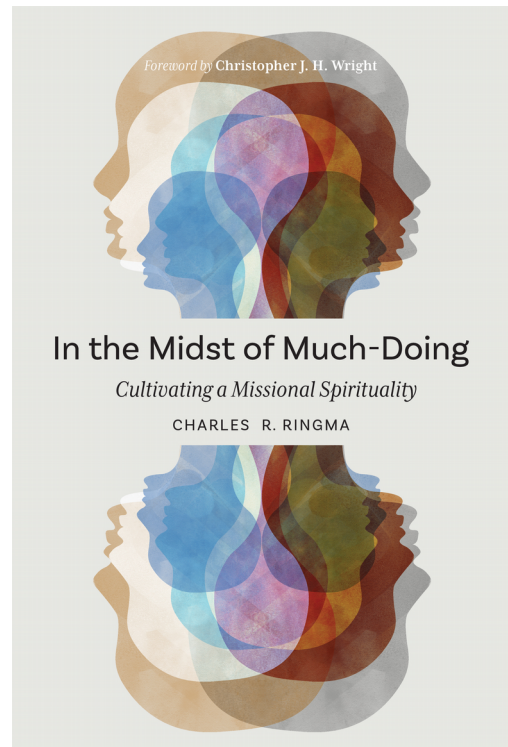
It knits together biblical, theological, spiritual, missional, philosophical, and sociological resources economically, even aesthetically, in ways that energise and also refresh. It integrates the whole person and missional process – the head (theological formation), heart (spiritual restoration), and hand (missional action). Ringma's personal quest for a more sustainable, grace-based, Spirit- and hope-inspired imagination has come to fruition in this magnum opus.

He writes with a hard-earned sense of realism about individual sin and structural evil, balanced passion for evangelism and social transformation, contemplation and action, mysticism and prophecy. It is a tour de force.

With critical but gracious and ecumenically-minded discernment, Ringma draws out and brings together the best of a vast range of Christian theological, spiritual and missional traditions he has made accessible in smaller spiritual guide books.

In an increasingly precarious global situation Ringma humbly but hopefully offers a way forward for formation of Christ-like 'lovers in a dangerous time'. Read it, take your time, if that's what you want to be.

Gordon Preece is a publicly pastoral and work-place missional theologian, author and Executive Director of Ethos Centre for Christianity and Society in Melbourne, Australia.



Knit together

Elizabeth Corah tssf

For all you knitters out there – this is a project you might like to take on. In response to our daily prayer, ‘knit together in community and prayer’, I have created a pattern for a simple knitted piece to keep your hands busy while you reflect on our community prayer.

You will need:

- a pair of knitting needles (any size you have).
- scraps of wool – any size or texture – op shops have interesting oddments
- the instructions and chart

Instructions: Use whatever wool you have to hand. I used tapestry wools, fancy yarns and leftovers from other knitting projects. Mix and match as you go, enjoying the diversity of our community.

Cast on at least 60 stitches.

Rows 1-10 knit

Row 11 knit 5, place a marker, purl to last 5 sts, place a marker, k to the end. These 5 stitches on each end will form the border.

Row 12 knit

Repeat Rows 11&12 until you are ready to start the words.

The chart is knitted in just 2 colours. So look through your stash to find some bigger bits.

If you are not comfortable with knitting the letters, just knit 14 rows of stocking stitch and embroider the words on later. Now comes the really fun part. Because our community is diverse the knitting can reflect that. Use different stitches, rib, criss cross stitch, cables, increase and then decrease, drop stitches or make lace. Also change wools, leave the knots on the back, use different colours, different plys. Change the needle size too. This then becomes a visual reminder of our community.

Now share the knitting around your group. When it gets to about 1m finish it off and start another. I hope we can collect enough strips to make rugs... watch this space! (And see photo on the front page.)

'...Grant, we pray, that being knit together in community and prayer, we your servants may glorify your holy name after the example of Saint Francis, and win others to your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'



Why I am voting Yes

Colin Valentine tssf

I will be supporting the Voice referendum because:

1. I accept the invitation given by Australia's First Peoples in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, to bring about the change that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want to see, with Constitutional recognition through a Voice being the first step.

The conclusion of the statement extends that invitation, '...**In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.**' (2017)

Also, at our Third Order General Chapter & Conference in Brisbane, 2018, we passed a motion expressing the Order's support of the Uluru Statement and a letter was written to the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, expressing that support. I encourage everyone to read The Uluru Statement from the Heart: <https://tinyurl.com/2vhb4hnp>

2. A Voice to Parliament means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be able to inform, give advice and be involved in decision making about policies and solutions that they know work for them and their communities.

3. A wrong needs to be righted. For me it is also a moral and justice issue. When Australia was 'discovered' by Captain Cook, on 22 August 1770, Cook declared the east coast of the continent a British possession. The land was described as 'terra nullius', or the land belonging to no one, and this remained the legal principle that formed the basis of British colonisation, until 1992 when the High Court brought down its finding in the Mabo vs Queensland (No. 2) case.

'Terra nullius' in 1770 denied the presence of the First Peoples of this country, who have lived on and cared for this land for over 65,000 years.

Much more could be said but I also encourage everyone to find out as much as you can about the Referendum. Also please read The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council statement: <https://tinyurl.com/3f6j6rx5> and the Prayer for the Voice: <https://tinyurl.com/mrn9mw9>. You can also put a corflute on your front fence!

