

Oceania

The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Sabah

FROM OUR MINISTER'S DESK



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This edition of Oceania comes as a “bumper issue” replacing the winter edition and including the Christmas edition. Owing to the resignation of our Editor, Ray Ainsworth of, the job has fallen to me to attempt to put the “paper to bed” We owe a debt of gratitude to Ray for all the work he has done over the years and we are most grateful for his service. Many thanks Ray and may God bless you always.

Enlightened Under the Example of St. Francis and St. Clare

Spontaneity is characteristic of an enlightened person. Francis and Clare were two of the most enlightened people in all of history. They lived in the moment, without succumbing to the claims of consistency, which, states their authenticity. A short story on St Francis reveals the truth.

Saint Francis of Assisi was singing as he lay on his death bed. People flocked at his window to get a glance of the saint. Brother Elias, a disciple and a member of the Franciscan order, came closer to Saint Francis and said, “Father there are a lot of people crowded at the window and there is nothing that we can do to refrain them from hearing you sing. It could pull down the esteem that they hold for you, though, you may have transcended the obligation to many who have regarded you as a Saint, forgetting yourself. Would it not be good to die more solemnly?”

“Please excuse me dear Brother. I feel so much of joy overflowing in my heart that I cannot stop singing”

Saint Francis in truth was not the person to be concerned with earthly concerns, especially over how he might go to God. Francis sought to be with God and at the end of his life was transfixed in his love of God and spontaneously sang praises to the glory of God. Whereas, his disciple was more concerned with people's criticism over St Francis and the order, which, shows that he was more concerned with what would actually become of him in future if people were to base their opinion on St Francis's way of dying. This clearly depicts the attitude of a person in whom the little self is dominant, as he cared very little for public opinion.

St. Francis was an enlightened person but where did the light come from? St. Francis sought the light of God and Our Lord gave him a tiny glimpse for to see God would be too much for us. With that glimpse of the majesty and love of God Francis gained the eternal thirst for God that drove his spontaneous praising of God

A person can reflect the life they lead through the way they die. St Francis at his death was absorbed with Christ and gently offered his soul to Christ in a most joyous death. In this way, his life long journey to Christ culminated in the most humble of deaths.



What has “new evangelisation” got to do with us as Secular Franciscans?

There has been a great deal of discourse recently throughout the world regarding the “New Evangelization” When the Pope points the finger and asks for a new evangelisation, is he pointing to us as Franciscans?

We are heirs of Jesus’ missionary mandate. The new evangelization is not "new" (meaning it is no innovation for the Church): today, just like yesterday, He sends us through the paths of the world to proclaim the Gospel to all the peoples of the world (cf. Mt 28:19). The Church is always missionary!

The love of Christ fills our hearts and urges us to evangelize. Through His love Jesus attracts people of all generations to Himself: at all times He convokes the Church and entrusts the Gospel’s announcement to it with an always new mandate.

Today a more convinced ecclesial commitment is also needed in favour of a "new evangelization" to rediscover the joy of believing and to find again the enthusiasm of spreading the faith.

Our Rule 14 says “*Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, **are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.** Mindful that anyone ‘who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself,’ let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service”*

Faith grows when we live it as a love which we receive and spread as an experience of grace and happiness.

Look at God’s merciful love: compassionate with our weakness, He has come to "call" us and "lead" us to His Love. The Church, clasping sinners to her bosom, is at once Holy and always in need of purification and following constantly the path of renewal. This renewal is part of the "new evangelization". Lately, the celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000 and the announcement of the "Year of Faith" are an invitation to an ever fuller conversion to God.

We as Franciscans are called in Rule 7 “*United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance” and motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls “conversion” **Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.***

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.

Faith must be lived by works of love. The renewal of the Church is also achieved through the witness offered by the life of believers: by our very existence in the world, Franciscans and indeed all Christians are called to radiate the Word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us.

Through faith, this new life of the baptized shapes the whole of human existence according to the radical new reality of the resurrection. Faith working through love becomes a new criterion of understanding and action that changes the whole of our life.

It often happens that Christians are very concerned with the social, cultural and political commitment, while they still consider faith as an obvious prerequisite of common life. But in reality, this prerequisite does not appear as such and it is often denied.

We need to rediscover the path of faith. We cannot let the salt become tasteless and the light remain hidden (cf. Mt 5:13-16). As the Samaritan woman did, we can feel again the need to approach the well to listen to Jesus, who invites us to belief in Him and to draw the living water that flows from its source (cf. Jn 4.14).

We must rediscover the pleasure of feeding on the Word of God and the Bread of life, offered as sustenance to all who are his disciples (cf. Jn 6.51).

To believe in Jesus Christ is, therefore, the path to reach a definite way to salvation.

Jesus calls us to a "renewed fidelity": although the content of faith does not change substantially, we must consider the changes in cultural perception and the serious difficulties of time regarding the profession of the true faith and its proper interpretation.

For centuries the essential contents are the heritage of all believers and they need to be confirmed, understood and deepened ever anew in order to give coherence in historical conditions different from the past.

The Church's teaching has the responsibility to enhance the meditation on faith to help all believers in Christ so that their support of the Gospel is more conscience and stronger each time.

In more recent times the Church has fulfilled this mission with the Second Vatican Council ("*A safe compass to guide us in the way of the new century*") and twice calling the "Year of Faith" (with Paul VI and Benedict XVI), among many other initiatives.

Faith is God's gift and the action of grace which acts and transforms us deep within. The knowledge of the mysteries that we believe in is not enough if afterward our heart – a person's true tabernacle - is not open by grace.

Faith implies a task and a public testimony and commitment (it is not something simply private).

Faith is choosing to stand with the Lord so as to live with Him, and precisely because it is a free act, also demands social responsibility for what one believes.

The knowledge of faith introduces us into the entire salvific mystery revealed by God.

There is not a "faith a la carte" (I accept only what I like); the given assent implies that, when we believe, we freely accept the whole mystery of faith. If I truly trust in God, then I accept whatever may come from Him.

Faith without charity does not bear fruits and charity without faith would constantly be a doubtful feeling. Faith and love need each other so that one allows the other to go on its way.

Hope is a faith commitment, for where there is no hope, there is no faith.

With strong words – which always relate to Christians – James, the Apostle, says: “Without works faith is dead on the inside. “Show me how anyone can have faith without actions and I will show you my faith by my actions“. (James 2.17-18)

Sustained by faith, we look with hope to our commitment in the world, waiting for new heavens and a new land in which righteousness dwells.

By faith, Mary accepted the Angel's word and believed the message, tasted the fruits of Jesus' resurrection, and treasuring every memory in her heart, she passed them on to the Twelve

Rule 9 states, " The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to His every Word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently."

By faith, the Apostles left everything to follow the Master; they went out to the whole world, following the command to bring the Gospel to all creation.

By faith, the disciples formed the first community gathered around the teaching of the Apostles. By faith, the martyrs gave their lives bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel...

By faith, across the centuries, Franciscan men and women of all ages have confessed the beauty of following the Lord Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

I pray, brothers and sisters that our faith may increase and strengthen our vocations as we now walk in the footsteps of those Franciscans who have gone before us.



The period leading up to Christmas as we commonly know it is Advent - The word Advent is from the Latin 'Adventus,' which means 'coming.' Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical year. Like Lent, Advent is a preparatory season so in order to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord let us take time to reflect on the significance of what it means that God took on human flesh to share Himself with us. Consider that God came to us as a child; in full humility and in that humility allows us to hold Him when we receive the Eucharist and become a home for Him.

As you move through your day, with all its ups and downs, remember that Christ can truly identify with all that you experience because of the humility of the Incarnation. We are often surrounded by so much noise that drowns out the voice of God in our lives.

Try to create an environment in which to listen to God speaking to you, so that you may better follow His will in your life. When in the car or at home, allow yourself a period of silence by not turning on the radio, stereo or television. Forgiving doesn't necessarily mean forgetting, but it does mean letting go of the grudge and animosity that you hold over another. What relationship in your life is in need of Healing? Let go of a grudge today and do something concrete to extend a hand of reconciliation.

May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace,
the gladness of Christmas give you hope,
the warmth of Christmas grant you love.

Fraternal Love

Sandra Tilley ofc

National Minister



Fr Victor Bonello Ofm Conv. RIP

Fr. Victor was born on the 29. 11. 1929, Gozo Malta. During the 2nd world war as Malta was under serious bombing from the Germans, Victor Bonello entered the Order of the Friars Minor Conventual, was finally professed in 1944 and ordained to the priesthood on the 23.03. 1947.

Fr Victor, regarded as the patriarch of the Conventual Friars in Australia, was one of the early friars who came to Australia in the 1950s to serve the immigrant Catholics. The Order at the invitation of the Bishops sent friars to open parish churches for these people and Fr Victor was a foundational member of the parish of St Francis of Assisi in Warrawong, NSW, which to this day the friars still administer.

Fr. Victor was responsible for the development of several Churches and schools hence the name Vic the builder. He was known for his booming voice as he preached and for leading the People of God in worship. He was a devoted son of St Francis, with a faithful love for the Church, the Holy Eucharist and Our Lady. He helped to assist the Third Order, now the Secular Franciscan Order, in their development, especially in our Conventual parishes. He sought his best as a friar priest to promote the spirit of St Francis amongst people. Fr Victor was a simple, good humoured and direct man. He took his duties seriously yet had a calm demeanour and enjoyed his cup of tea. He was fond of canaries and enjoyed fraternity with his friars and interest in family and friends. He had some great tales from the past especially when he was missionary in Algeria. He was buried from St Joseph's Springvale on the feast of St Maximilian Kolbe.

Bishop Vincent Long ofm conv was the main celebrant of the funeral Mass. Father's nephew, Fr Emmanuel Bonello ofm conv. preached. The friars in attendance prayed for his eternal reward at the vigil the night before and participated in the funeral Mass offered for the repose of Fr Victor's soul.

Many priests, Franciscan religious, seculars and laity attended. Fr Victor was buried at the Springvale cemetery with other friars. May he rest in peace.



THE TRANSITUS OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH SPRINGVALE

3 OCTOBER 2012



St Joseph's OFS Fraternity members, Springvale, were hosts this year for the Ceremony of The Transitus of St Francis of Assisi held in the parish church of Springvale. The parish of Springvale is under the care of the Conventual Franciscan Friars. Members of the Fraternity advertised the holding of the Ceremony in the Springvale parish, as well as adjoining parishes and invited other fraternities in this part of Melbourne, as well as inactive members to attend. We were delighted to have a number of Conventual Franciscan Friars, members of the Chelsea Fraternity as well as parishioners of St Joseph's, and others join us for the Ceremony.

The Spiritual Assistant of the Springvale Fraternity, Fr John Vayalilkarottu, Ofm Conv (Fr John V.) arranged the liturgy for the Ceremony and also presided at it. A reverent atmosphere was created in the Church by the dimming of the lights.

Before the ceremony commenced the Minister of the Springvale Fraternity, Anne Flood ofs, gave a short overview of the reason for The Transitus.

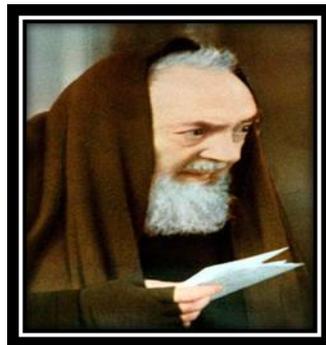
During the Entrance Hymn there was a procession led by the Thurifer followed by Fr John V. holding a lighted candle. The candle was placed on the altar, where a relic of the saint had already been placed. The relic was then incensed.

After an Opening Prayer a Reading from *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* by Thomas of Celano (214-7) took place. The Reading was broken into 4 sequences read alternately by Ray Ainsworth ofs and Helen Britton ofs. After the first reading sequence a friar's habit was brought forward by several members and laid in front of the altar whilst soft music was played.

Following the second reading sequence a basket of bread was brought forward and blessed by Fr John V. and distributed by several members to the congregation. A period of silence was held after the Reading referring to the actual passing of Francis' soul to heaven. Following the 4th sequence of the Reading 5 red candles were placed around the habit by members to mark the sacred stigmata. Psalm 141 was then said in choir by the congregation.

Fr Adrian Robson Ofm Conv proclaimed the Gospel (Jn 13:1-17) followed by the homily delivered by Fr John V. Our Minister Anne Flood ofs led the Prayers of Intercession and the Recessional Hymn *All Creatures of our God and King* concluded this reflective and prayerful ceremony.

The congregation, which numbered over 100, was then invited by Minister Anne Flood ofs to join the fraternity in the Parish Centre for a light supper.



“Do not stop promoting the Third Order and gaining true life for everyone by this means. Make St Francis and his true spirit known to everyone and your reward in heaven will be very great.” (Letters III)

FEAST OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

On Sunday 7 October brothers and sisters from the Victorian Regional Fraternity, attended the High Mass held at St. Francis Church in Melbourne in honour of our Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi. Music was supplied by St Francis' Choir with Canzona Brass.

The First Reading was Read by Ray Ainsworth ofs and the Offertory Gifts were carried by Moya Roadley ofs and Martin Prest. The Celebrant was Fr. Anthony Sweeney SSS. A copy of his Homily is below.

During my student days I remember seeing a book on Gestalt therapy which contained some fascinating images. Of two that I can recall, the first was an outline of two faces that appeared to be looking at each other, and it was possible if you switched your vision or perception to then see the outline of a chalice. The second was an image of a somewhat elderly and rather unattractive old woman, and again if you could make the switch of vision you could see an image of a very attractive younger woman. It was fascinating to note that you could see one or the other but not both at the same time. It was also interesting to note that some people could see one image but could not make the switch to see the second image.

Gestalt therapy was not developed until the 1940's so Jesus was not referring to that in today's Gospel passage, but it's interesting to note what he had to say about the way God reveals his message to mere children and hides it from the learned. Jesus contends that the Pharisees in spite of all their learning and knowledge could not see what was staring them in the face. They could not make that shift of vision or perception to hear his message. Seemingly something was blocking their vision, and as far as we can tell it was their obsession with the Law and their interpretation of it. What they seemed to lack was a childlike trust in Jesus.

Jesus is saying that our first point of reference in terms of our relationship with God is childlike trust in him. It's the person who trusts in Jesus and has faith in him who is able to accept the invitation to don his yoke. We normally associate a yoke as a burden, it's that apparatus placed on the shoulders of oxen or bullocks when they are harnessed up and put to work to plough a field.

So why is Jesus' yoke not a burden? We will only know that if we trust him sufficiently to accept his Word and follow him. As he reminds us in today's scripture, "my yoke is easy and my burden light". If we trust him he will walk with us and shoulder the load! The load is not removed but made easier.

I believe St Francis of Assisi is a model for us of one to whom God revealed his message. Francis' childlike trust in Jesus was sufficient to walk away from a life of plenty to a life of simplicity. In fact

his embrace of all created things has been an inspiration to attract thousands and thousands of people to follow in his way, to put on the yoke of Jesus as a means of discovering the richness of God's message.

YEAR OF FAITH BEGINS ON 11 OCTOBER 2012.

“The Years of Grace and Faith fit together perfectly: grace is God’s free gift to us and our response is the faith that accepts the gift. So the two Years fit together as neatly as God’s gift and our response. It’s when those two meet that we have the Christian life in all its power and beauty.”

Archbishop Mark Coleridge



The Year of Grace 2012

Francis of Assisi experienced the grace of God in his life to such a degree that he recognized it and co-operated with it as the will of God for his life.

In the Life of St Francis by Thomas of Celano, we read that from the first flower of his youth he was given little or no instruction *in the way of God* or knowledge of Him. By the change brought about in him by the power of the right hand of the Most High he was justified from sin. And by the grace and power of the Most High he was filled with divine wisdom beyond all others of his time.

A graced place for Francis was St Mary of the Portiuncula and before his death Francis longed to be taken to that church and so it was also the will of God that his holy soul, freed from the flesh, would pass over to the kingdom of heaven from that place where, while still living in the flesh, he had first been given the knowledge of higher things and had the oil of salvation poured out upon him. He knew that the kingdom of heaven was established in every corner of the earth and he believed that divine grace was given to God’s chosen ones in every place. Yet he knew from his own experience that the place of the church of St Mary of the Portiuncula was especially full of grace and filled with visits of heavenly spirits. So he often told the brothers: “See to it, my sons, that you never abandon this place. If you are driven out from one side, go back in from the other, for this is truly a holy place and the dwelling place of God.

Here the Most High increased our numbers when we were only a few; here He enlightened the hearts of his poor ones with the light of His wisdom; here He kindled our wills with the fire of His love; here all who pray wholehearted will receive what they ask, while offenders will be severely punished. Therefore, my sons, hold this place, *God’s dwelling*, as worthy of all honour and here praise God in cries of joy and praise with your whole heart.

In that place Francis prayed for God’s mercy to set his sons free and fervently begged that they be preserved *in the grace given to them*.

So in this year of Grace appreciate the Grace of God in your own life. Look out for it sincerely and cooperate fully with God's will for you.

Elizabeth Arthy ofs

Regional Minister

Queensland



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*(The Apostolate of the National Fraternity
of Oceania)*



I would like to share with you some thoughts from the National Formators Seminar 2012 which was held at St. Joseph's Spirituality Centre, Baulkham Hills in Sydney. I consider it to have been one of GRACE for the Secular Franciscan Order in this YEAR OF GRACE for Australia.

Our National Formator, Moya Roadley ofs along with National Minister Sandra Tilley ofs presented us with a highly informative 3 day Seminar.

The Formators Seminar emphasised the great importance of FORMATION and the need to adhere to the 4 PILLARS of Franciscan Formation as follows:

1. SPIRITUALITY (Sacred Scripture)
2. FORMATION (OFS Rule and Constitutions)
3. FRATERNITY (Life of St. Francis and Franciscan Saints)
4. APOSTOLATE (Church teachings -Laity)
with reference to RULE 7 (daily conversion) and RULE 11 (simplicity)

Encouraging LECTIO DIVINA into all areas of FORMATION was highly recommended .This involves READING a passage from Sacred Scripture followed by MEDITATION, CONTEMPLATION and ACTION. (I would highly suggest deepening our study of St Clare's teaching in this area).

The Seminar was essentially CLEAR in the need for UNIFORM FORMATION for candidates until profession throughout Australia. It was unanimously agreed that "Fully mature with the Fullness of Christ" by Benet A. Fonk OFM. is the preferred material to be used. The Formator in each Fraternity is to be CREATIVE, under the prayerful guidance of the Holy Spirit, in implementing the 4 PILLARS in formation for candidates (TIME of DISCERNMENT . "To live as Francis lived" and CIOFS (available on web), it was agreed, are the best materials for ONGOING FORMATION. These can be used to complement one another. Again....BE CREATIVE !.

It was also thought to be useful for Regional Formators to meet twice yearly with ALL Formators from the REGION to prayerfully organize RETREATS, Seminars, Workshops & Days of Prayer etc.

Formators are urged to have up to 4 persons to assist them in formation planning. Also emphasised at the Seminar was that Enquirers be encouraged to JOURNAL daily reflecting on Franciscan prayers and readings. The meeting place for Enquirers should be neutral i.e. Parish House, Presbytery (not a personal home).

I sincerely thank our National Formator Moya Roadley ofs for her encouragement and assistance to me before and during the Seminar.

Brothers and Sisters, may all that we say and do be ALWAYS for the greater glory of God under the guidance of our Seraphic Father St. Francis.

PAX ET BONUM,
Susan Storey ofs,
Victoria.

ROMA WILSON OF PERTH FRATERNITY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF PROFESSION

Roma Wilson was born at Cannington WA in 1927. After leaving school she worked as a typist for the Water Board. During World War II she joined the WAAAF where she was employed as a cypher assistant. After the war Roma trained as a nurse at Royal Hobart Hospital. After graduation Roma worked as a theatre nurse at Ballarat Hospital and at Thames Hospital in New Zealand. Roma returned to school at Leederville Technical College to gain entry to university. Roma studied medicine at Wellington and Otago Universities in New Zealand.

Roma was received into the Third Order of St Francis at Dunedin on 3 November 1953 by Fr Cox and professed on 26 August 1956. Roma returned to Perth WA where she practised as a doctor at Royal Perth Hospital and King Edward Memorial Hospital. Roma travelled to USA where after gaining her Fellowship she practised as a pathologist for 31 years.

Since her return to Perth WA in 2002, Roma has been an active member of Perth Fraternity whose members belatedly celebrated her 50th anniversary of profession at a Mass celebrated at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church Maylands by Fr Stanilaw Tomasiak ofm on 26 August 2012 followed by lunch at the Dome Café Maylands.

Michael McGuire



Well done good and faithful servant!



“In the quiet prayers we offer, in the silent harmony of hearts, in the love we give and gather. . . Peace is born anew.

May it bless your Christmas with gentle joy.”