

TAU February 2023

The Province of the Pacific, Third Order Society of St Francis



Contents

Curiosity	2
Keeping People Safe	3
Moving through Initial Formation	4
A Walk Made Together	6
The Joys for Novice Counsellors	7
A Wide Space of Freedom	8
Juniper's February Report	8
Eulogy for Heather	9
Franciscan Joy	10
A Franciscan Voice	11
Franciscans in Korea	12
Eulogy for Claudia	15
An evening with Archbishop Rowan	16
Rose's Books	18
Eco Theology	21
Solomon Islands, Franciscans International	22

Tau

Articles, reviews and reports on Area activities welcome **by 19 May 2023**

Contact: Penny Kennett penelope.kennett@gmail.com

3 Farm Road, Wellington 6012, mobile 02102227355

Tau's next issue - end of May 2023

Website - tssf.org.nz

Please check the website for updated Intercession and Address lists.

Contact: Janice Thorne janicethorne@gmail.com

Curiosity

The New Year has long begun and I hope you are all in a position to look forward with faith and trust in 2023. According to the Aotearoa NZ news, filled daily with alarming reports of earthquakes, floods, lightning, mudslides and severe rain and wind, we are living in times of 'biblical proportions'. I did think that we read and study the Bible and here we are living it!! I thank you in this moment for your constant prayers for those affected by the recent cyclone. I send to you a request for your continued prayers for daily strength, peace, knowing when is the right time and way to help and help safely, and courage.

It has been a huge blessing to have had some great times of contemplation and reflection over recent months. What has come to mind often has been this word 'curiosity'.

Curiosity has both cause and effect, being the driver of science and research as we come to know more about the world we live in and in our personal lives and relationships. It is the latter which has often been my companion. When 'confronted' by a different school of thought to my own it has been challenging to be curious enough to ask myself why I think differently? My approach has been, is this God opening the door for me to change, maybe in a small way or is this one of life's moments where we see things so much clearly and this thrusts us in a differing direction or thought pattern to where we have ever been before.

Or, is where I am at absolutely fine and that having been curious I am allowing myself to 'rest' in my current thoughts or decisions on the specific subject or issues?

For me, I have discovered that to cultivate curiosity I need to allow more time for contemplation. This is where the quiet and time encourages my mind, body and soul to focus on God in the present and apply this to everyday situations and challenges.

The dictionary says curiosity is the 'desire to know and learn' not necessarily to change or become something we are not, but to grow because we know and learn.

I hope and pray over the coming weeks you will allow curiosity to get the better of you as you know and learn into a deeper Franciscan way.

Peace, blessings and comfort to you all,

Blair, Minister Provincial

Keeping People Safe

As a result of the The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, both state and faith-based care, the Anglican Church is required to be much more proactive in its efforts to keep people safe.

At Chapter 2022, as part of our review of the TSSF Safe Community and Conflict Transformation Policy, it was agreed that: All office-holders for the Third Order Society of Saint Francis and all Novice Counsellors are required to complete a 'Boundaries Course' within one month of their appointment if they have not completed this course within the last three years. A boundaries workshop is valid for three years. For those licensed to a diocesan bishop, boundaries course obligations required by the diocese are sufficient to cover work within the Order.

We recognise that it may be difficult to find a Boundaries workshop running within a month of someone being appointed to an office or being asked to become a novice counsellor. However, the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki runs an online course that any new office holder or novice counsellor from any diocese may take at any time. There are three separate parts to complete.

The person to contact about the online workshop is:

Carolyn Phelan - bishopspa@Wtanglican.nz

Assistant Administrator, Archbishop Philip Richardson's Office - Primate and Archbishop of the New Zealand Dioceses, DDI0 06 757 6149

Office Hours: Tuesday 8.00am-3.00pm, Wed to Friday 8.30am-3.30pm

You are also able to complete a workshop through your own diocese. Last year a zoom workshop for TSSF people was run most successfully. We're hoping this will happen every three years, or more frequently if there is demand.

Once you have completed a boundaries course, please send proof of completion (the email recording your results, or a certificate of completion, depending) to the Assistant Minister Provincial (who keeps the records) - currently Pip Colgan pip.colgan@xtra.co.nz

This is now a requirement if you are an office holder or a novice counsellor - not something you might get round to doing one day!

Peace, **Pip, Assistant Minister Provincial**

Moving through the initial formation process

For those who are currently moving through the initial formation process and their Novice Counsellors (NC), Marion Fairbrass, Formation Director, writes:

Who contacts who? I am often asked about this. I hope that as the formation journey begins and progresses, that either party will take the initiative of contacting the other. I don't think there is a 'correct' process.

When a NC is assigned to an Enquirer, both parties are given contact details. How welcoming for the NC to first make contact with the newcomer. But it is also OK if it is the other way round. If the three documents needed for becoming a Postulant seem to be taking a while, NCs should feel comfortable about making contact to ask if it is all going well, and if help is needed.

If the person journeying into the Order is on a considered journey – which is usually the case – then there is the expectation that they will know when they need to report, when they need to have completed responding to a Study, and take the initiative, contacting their NC at the expected time.

However, we all live busy lives, and can be distracted by other matters requiring our attention. Also, some of us are naturally more organised than others!

I would like to encourage all NCs and their Postulants/Novices to discuss this and find out what works best for them. I see nothing wrong in a NC sending a reminder that it is time to report. While the formal part of the relationship requires contact every three months, it is a good idea to discuss this. Some people may feel very isolated from the Order with only three-monthly contact.

Formation Study and Quarterly Reporting. I suspect from some of the communications I receive, that there is some confusion about these two aspects of the initial formation journey. The quarterly report is focussed on "How am I keeping my Rule? Are there any changes I need to make to my Rule? Or to my living?" This may also be the time for discussing your learnings, questions etc about the Study you have undertaken over the past three months.

If your life has been busy or complicated and you have been unable to complete a Study by the date for reporting, **the quarterly report should still be made at the right time.**

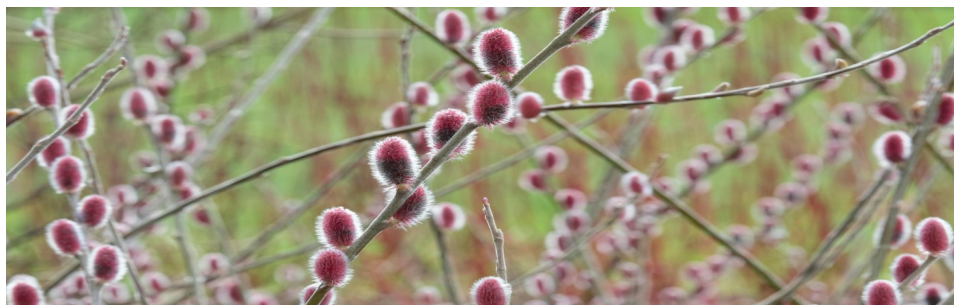
A discussion can then take place about future Studies and when they will be done. It is OK to take longer to complete the Studies and to delay asking for profession until eight have been completed. The Study is designed to be undertaken **throughout** the three months leading up to the quarterly reporting, rather than looked at in the week before the reporting meeting. The best value of the Studies will come when the content is read with sufficient time to reflect. In each Study there are suggestions for further reading or websites to visit. While this is not compulsory, because being a Franciscan is not about reading more books, there are some sections where some further reading would be beneficial.

Responding to the Formation Study. There is a requirement that eight of the twelve Studies must be completed before a Novice can be granted election to profession. There is, however, flexibility about how Novices respond to each Study. Some of us are natural readers and writers, and will enjoy writing our responses to each Study and send that to our NC. Others may want to just make rough jottings about their ideas and engage in a conversation, either face to face or electronically. In my work with students who find writing difficult, I have become accustomed to recommending other ways of responding and communicating that the mahi has actually been done. Consider: mind maps to support a discussion; bullet pointed ideas; an oral recording sent via email.

Let's be free to engage with these Studies and respond to them in whatever way brings life and growth.

As always, I am able to be contacted if you have any questions or comments – and will listen to suggestions and disagreements too!

Peace, **Marion Fairbrass, Formation Director**





Kereru at St Isaacs, photo Maranu Gascoigne

A walk we make together

My immediate response to the request of whether I would consider being the Novice Counsellor for a new inquirer has always been, “Give me some time to pray about it”. At first I was very hesitant, however in the past twenty years I have never come up with anything other than a “Yes”. Each time there follows the anticipation of sitting down with someone, of learning about their life and the spiritual journey that has brought them to exploring a vocation to the Third Order.

We start reading, praying and reflecting on the Notes together, continuing over the next three years. Usually we meet every three months; sometimes monthly. We have used additional Franciscan resources to deepen our knowledge and understanding of how revolutionary Francis and his followers were. Once, two Novices met with me together and this proved very successful as we listened and learned by bouncing ideas off each other. It's challenging to compare what took place so long ago, with our Rules, and our lives today and how we can be guided in our walk and our lives by walking in Saint Francis' footsteps. In thinking about being a Novice Counsellor, I always think in terms of 'we' and 'our' because it really is a walk we make together. There has never been a time when we have parted at the end of the session without me knowing I have gained from the time together and praying that the Novice has as well.

Pam Barrett, tssf

The joys of being a novice counsellor

Being a novice counsellor is a great privilege. Sure, there are some duties attached to the role but ultimately it is a great fillip especially for someone like me who has been in the Order for a while. It sharpens up your own life as a tertiary, at least that has been my experience.

A long time ago I was novice counsellor for several people, some of whom, remarkably, still belong. There was a very long gap until four or five years ago I was asked to be work with someone who was in a different area. We e-mailed. I actually met him only once - at his novicing in Taupō just before the first 'lockdown'. Virginia and I joined the central area for a great day together. As he was American, Peter and his wife went to the Cook Islands for visa purposes and got stuck there because of the border closure. They were supported by the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny and became Roman Catholics. Hence, I ceased being novice counsellor. Yet, we did not cease our friendship garnered mostly by email. We have in fact been in touch in the last few days.

While being novice counsellor means meeting up, e-mailing or zooming to discuss the novice notes and to talk about the Franciscan journey, it fosters real relationships that go beyond the formalities. Naturally there are special occasions – such as our simple but moving procedure for a person to become a novice and even more so to be professed. It was a highly satisfying day for me as well as for my Novice Christopher when he was professed at last year's Convocation.

At a deep level, being a novice counsellor is a bit like being a novice all over again. I have been reminded of who Francis and Clare were but more significantly what they represented. So, I have been challenged to re-think what it means to be a tertiary, how it impacts on my life, values and relationships, how my own spiritual path is shaping up. I hunch that I have changed and been 'renewed' as a result. Every novice and every counsellor will be different. I can testify though that it is all remarkably worthwhile.

Bill Atkin tssf



Christopher and Richard enthral Sarah and other Gubbio whanau with a reading of **Quaky Cat**, a picture book gift from Rosemary.

A wide space of freedom

She was an amazing Novice Counsellor. For more than two years, Pam Bosworth guided, encouraged and challenged me. Her wisdom, humour and grounded common sense made each session a joy and well worth the hour's drive to meet in her home. She became the model I aspired to in the ministry of N C and in that model, was my own delight along with the privilege of sharing the Franciscan pilgrimage with each novice.

Not all went on to Profession. This is one of the strengths of the training period. It is a time of careful and prayerful discernment in the wide space of freedom to choose without judgement. I think that aspect is vital.

It takes grace and courage to step away and grace and courage to commit to the Order. There is humility, love and joy to stand beside a novice as the TSSF cross of Profession is placed around the neck. There is deep gratitude to stand in the long line of people like Pam.

Maggie Smith

Juniper Forest (North) report on their 11 February meeting

Our February meeting was a celebratory occasion during which Daniel Sahayam and Jeremy Woods were noviced. We enjoyed a play about Brother Juniper, adapted and organized by the inimitable Chris Barfoot! Our noble enquirers Hilary and Kit Wilett video'd the play which gave some insight into why we chose the name 'Juniper Forest'. Marion Fairbrass our Formation Director was welcomed.

We enjoyed vigorous discussion on the chapter 'As small as a mustard seed' from Archbishop David Moxon's book, *No Reira Nei Te Awhina Moku? From where will my help come?*

We reflected on two questions.

- 1) What are the characteristics of the mustard seed which guide us on our journey?
- 2) What is the significance of the tree given in the Genesis story and what we know about how trees can connect with one another, especially young trees, and given that we are Juniper Forest.

All was followed by a shared lunch.

To honour Heather and her Franciscan journey with us

Heather Moodie, 17 November 1938 - 5 October 2022.

On 14 October 2022 friends and family, Tertiaries, and parishioners from St. Luke's and St Matthews-in-the-City gathered at St Luke's Anglican Church, Mt. Albert, to honour and give thanks for Heather's life. Although Heather had not been well for several years, mercifully she didn't suffer a lingering final illness.

So it was with sadness, relief and gratitude that we listened to the opening prayers, followed by William Byrd's *Ave Verum Corpus*, sung by Cantorum. Heather had been a dedicated member of this choir whose beautiful singing had given Heather great delight, and a place to share and pursue her lifelong deep love of music.

Heather was a passionate person with a zest for life, and recollections and tributes paid to Heather reflected her wide interests - music, drama, art, veganism, animal welfare, wild life, teaching, travel, history, Franciscan spirituality and liturgy.

We heard how Heather's love and respect for both the written and spoken word were reflected in the meticulous way she prepared for both reading at Sunday worship, and for various roles she took in the Shakespearean reading group she belonged to.

Heather was a wonderful advocate for all she was involved with, whether it was animal rights or issues of justice. She sought to be well informed about the causes she supported.

Towards the end of Heather's service, before the Commendation and Blessing, we sang *All Creatures of our God and King*. It seemed a heartfelt offering of praise for Heather's rich and full life.

Tssf has a potential donor who would look at funding Franciscan initiatives or further study such as Spiritual Direction courses. If you are interested, have a plan, or have been thinking, please get in touch with Blair to see how the plan fits within the donor's goals.

Gubbio and Franciscan Joy

Gubbio (Wellington area) Group met for the first time in 2023 on Saturday 11 February at St Aidan's, Miramar. Seventeen of us were present, including one enquirer and the two members of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans who regularly join us. Rev Graeme Webb presided at our Eucharist. At the end of the liturgy, we gave a farewell blessing to two of our stalwarts, Richard Roberts and Christopher Diggle. Both head to Christchurch, sad for us but we hand them over to our friends down south with our love.

After lunch, we set our programme for the rest of the year. We decided to continue to bring our own lunches, given Covid's continuing presence, and the winter season with its bugs being nearly upon us. The next meeting will be on April Fool's Day, 1 April, which we thought entirely appropriate for an order committed to the note of joy. In fact, our study was on joy. Christopher Diggle led us in a role play about the journey by Francis and Leo from Perugia to the Portiuncula.

Francis told Leo what perfect joy is not, and then what it is. After this we broke into three groups to discuss three different questions. Just one thought: joy may be about smiles and laughter, but it is something to be taken really seriously.

For the remainder of the year our focus will be the book *Franciscan Footprints: Following Christ in the Ways of Francis and Clare* (2020) by the late Helen Julian CSF.

Bill Atkin tssf



Gubbio's Jai prepared a delicious feast for Christchurch-bound Richard and Christopher. We enjoyed welcoming tssf Ailsa Cornell, here briefly from the States.

A Franciscan Voice

A few years ago (pre-covid era), a few of us completed two submissions to the government on social justice issues. When we had written the submissions, they were circulated to the tssf whole membership in New Zealand.

Members were invited to ask for their name and contact details to be added to the submission, which was then submitted from 'the undersigned members of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis, Province of the Pacific'. We did not speak on behalf of the whole order, the whole Province or even of all members in New Zealand.

I would like to do some more of this mahi – having a voice about social issues in our country – but find I do not have the confidence to work on submissions alone. It was far easier working with one or two others.

I wonder if there are others who would like to be part of a group involved in this mahi. I envisage a group of several, say about six, who form a loose committee that looks at issues we wish to submit about, and then have two or three of that group write the actual submission. Any member could be involved at any time if they had something they were passionate about. All members would have the opportunity to opt in or opt out of adding their name to the submission.

I am happy to collect names of anyone who is interested in a venture such as this and to call an initial online meeting to chat about how to begin and proceed.

Marion Fairbrass

Juniper Forest's 2023 Diary

Meeting dates

Saturdays: April 1st June 10th August 12th October 7th December 9th

If in Auckland you are always welcome to join us!

Franciscans in Korea

Lynn Kim arrived in Korea on the 30 September and met other Franciscans on the 2nd October at a friary/retreat centre. She reports on her experience: On Sunday the 2nd of October the tertiaries in Korea gathered at the friary and retreat centre in Gangchon, roughly an hour and a half drive from Seoul. The gathering was to mark Transitus and for renewing vows. Since the Monday was a public holiday it was a good opportunity to get together in person. I made contact with a Korean tertiary while I was still in New Zealand so I had already scheduled to attend the meeting with my mum. I'd only spent one full day in Seoul but that was enough to make me



crave the countryside and fresh air (the yellow dust pollution was quite bad when I landed). The friary is located in a beautiful spot surrounded by forested hills. Three brothers live there and look after the retreat centre. The first part of the retreat centre was built in the early 2000s and then extra floors were added in 2019. I loved hearing birdsong and resting in the quiet. When my mum and I settled into our room she cranked up the underfloor heating and started reading a Franciscan book that was in the room. I'm really thankful for this book that was translated by a local tertiary because it helped my mum understand what the Third Order is and why I joined. I read outside, chatted to the brothers, and waited for others to arrive. I arrived by dinner time and the brothers cooked for us. Including me there were seven tertiaries staying overnight. Two were professed and the rest were novices. Currently, Korea is a region that is 'in formation'. Dinner was simple and delicious. I tried dried eggplant tea for the first time. It was surprisingly nice.

Later, when we did night prayer and renewal of vows, a few more people joined by zoom. The brothers led the songs and liturgy, featuring a wooden flute and a very cool singing bowl. We did a lot of chanting psalms and reading scripture together. We also took turns saying all the daily principles. For me it was the first time seeing the principles and prayers in Korean which was very cool. After the service we all went to the dining room to chat over wine and snacks. We shared why we joined the Third Order and got to know one another better as a few of us were meeting for the first time. I was exhausted but persevered until my brain quit at around 11pm. I was the first to leave and go to sleep! Everyone else seemed wide awake.

The next morning we had sandwiches and coffee with the brothers. Overall great banter and good vibes. Every Tuesday evening we continue to meet on zoom for night prayer and sharing about our week.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch by email:

lynnykim1996@gmail.com

My blog for my travels in Korea: <https://www.yaeyeah.wordpress.com>

Lynn Kim, Southern Region

Ash Wednesday (final stanza), by T S Eliot 1927

Blessèd sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the fountain,
spirit of the garden,

Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood

Teach us to care and not to care

Teach us to sit still

Even among these rocks,

Our peace in His will

And even among these rocks

Sister, mother

And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,

Suffer me not to be separated

And let my cry come unto Thee.

Anne Scott continues: I had often heard what a privilege it has been for a Novice Counsellor to be alongside a person testing their vocation to the Third Order. And that certainly was the case for me as Heather embarked on her Franciscan journey. It was also a challenge and a joy as I needed to reflect on my own calling. Heather brought her enquiring mind and her passion to this early part of her formation.

I enjoyed hearing also a little about Heather's adventures and teaching experiences in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Heather used her love of music to motivate her students to express themselves, to put their feelings down on paper. She wasn't teaching her pupils 'English' in the traditional sense, but how to write. Heather said those youngsters gained confidence and self belief, thus enabling them to rise above the poverty into which many of them were born. She valued them and believed in them.

Heather enthusiastically attended our Area meetings and was professed on 8 December 2018. I was saddened to learn of her withdrawal from the Order a couple of years later.

We have missed Heather's enthusiasm, her articulate and enquiring mind and her commitment to the Franciscan way of life.

Rest In Peace good friend. **Anne Scott**, Juniper Forest

Companions' Corner

Nau mai, Haere mai to all Companions!

Your stories, observations and insights are welcome here.

Send to the Editor, or any member, for inclusion in the next issue.

Eulogy for Claudia Mason

It was with a real shock that my phone went and Judy Butler told me that Claudia, our well-beloved Claudia, had been killed in a road accident. It hadn't been that long ago that many had caught up with her at Convocation. Claudia was a Franciscan that everyone knew and admired. Her quiet presence, her love of the land, her love of her animals and her simple Franciscan living touched so many. She was known and admired by so many in our Franciscan family but also in her home town of Waipawa.

For us in our area she was there to point us always to what it meant to be a Franciscan. I remember her as our local Chaplain many years ago and the quiet encouragement she gave to many. Life hasn't always been easy for Claudia but her life has always been to help others and her special care and love for her foster handicapped son, a real example of living out the Gospel.

At her funeral, her Vicar Joan set the scene by acknowledging her as a Franciscan and how her life was lived out in the Spirit of both Francis and Clare. Although we all felt real sadness, there was also a sense of celebration as we gathered to say thank you, to celebrate her life, even those times of sadness and to leave her with God.

Claudia, thank you for being that special person who touched so many lives. May your example continue to inspire many. Rest In Peace.



Claudia was a professed tertiary
tssf since 1986, over 36 years,
who died 13th December, 2022

Dorothy Brooker

Consider an evening with Archbishop Rowan Williams

For those of you who have visited St. Isaac's you will know that Alverna is situated a few paddocks below the main dwellings. Brother Brian SSF lived a 'hermit life' here for about five years or so: anyway, you get the picture.

There is no internet facility, landline and very minimal cell phone coverage at Alverna. So, I often listen to something that is available off-line.

Recently I spent an evening with the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Reverend Rowan Williams. Described as a Welsh man, an academic, a poet, speaking eleven languages, he is patron and supporter of numerous and excellent charities and organisations. An author many times over, an outstanding teacher and most caring friend, husband, dad, and recently a grandfather.

Then the punch line comes: "through all this he has always been a *man of prayer* with God right at the centre of things."

Rowan opens with this question: 'What we are doing as Christians when we 'pray'? And particularly, what is involved in finding the 'centre'? The centre - of Our Lives? Our World? And even - Our Church?

He offers some brief lines from Romans 8: 16, 19 – 23. You might like to take a look at this passage before settling down to listen to him.

Having spoken for less than five minutes he says, "There in short space is the very heart, the very centre of what we need to say about Christian prayer and you could perhaps summarise it by saying that Christian prayer is precisely what we don't do, not just because we are bad at it, but because what is going on in prayer is God returning to God through us."

He invites us to grow in the freedom of talking to God as Jesus talks to God, saying 'Abba, Father'. At this point he wisely suggests that, "There it all is", and he might as well sit down at this point and just leave us to think about that for the next hour or so.

He gifts the audience, and maybe you the listener, with many auditory and visual images. Prayer becomes something with life, texture, form, colour and so on.

We realise we belong together and that the humanity of each of us is woven into the humanity of all of us. And the humanity of all of us is woven into the whole life of creation.

I wrote this prior to Cyclone Gabrielle's devastating blow to so many of our most vulnerable communities across the North Island and the heavy weight of silt, loss of homes and livelihoods. The deep cry of nature resonates in the fibres of our being as the grief cry calls out for those still missing.

Rowan expounds on four stances: Theological, Physical, Worldly and Church. He explores the relationship between prayer and effective action.

He clearly states the relevance of sacrament in Baptism (God embracing a new daughter or son) and, Eucharist (sharing of Jesus' own energy and identity with us so that his prayer may become ours). Both becoming sharply focused as we walk through Lent - Holy week – Easter and the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle (Life – Death – Transition).

In concluding, Archbishop Rowan uses an analogy of music - one to which I resonated. Around the age of 16 I was watching Jacqueline du Pre' perform Elgar's *Cello Concerto*. Mesmerised, it seemed to me that the cello was an extension of her very being. I felt a deep conviction at that time to discover what the early desert mothers and fathers describe as 'prayer of the heart' and vowed to live close to its centre. This memory has sustained me over many years as I learn about what prayer 'is' and 'is not'.

I would be surprised if you are not nudged or reminded of some moment in your early life when prayer was something that you knew to be intrinsic to you 'being' and not to you 'doing'.

Rowan delightfully points us in the right direction when he suggests that God is asking us to "Just sit there where I can see you".

Listen to Rowan Williams here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOYpXLfr004>

Listen to Elgar's *Cello Concerto* here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPhkZW_jwc0

Or find a piece of music that stirs your soul and feeds your heart.

If you would like to offer some promptings, nudges or inklings that came from your listening to *The Journey of Prayer*, consider emailing me and we could follow up on this theme in the next edition of Tau.

If you would like to come and visit with us, please get in touch at: stisaacs.wardens@xtra.co.nz or call **Maranu** on 09 4058 439

Photo below: Ash Wednesday Communion in St Isaac's Chapel. Photo, Maranu Gascoigne



ROSE'S BOOKS

I was professed in 2000 and knowing that I was an ESOL teacher, or English for Speakers of Other Languages, I was chosen in 2007 to be the Novice Counsellor for a young Melanesian women, a busy and bubbly mother of four, whose husband was doing some study at the Anglican Theological College in Auckland. A lot of the Novice Studies weren't particularly suitable for a ESOL learner with their long sentences and unfamiliar words. I spent many delightful hours with her and her lovely family simplifying the stories of Francis, which she in turn would tell back to me. She was excited that these stories were simple enough for her to tell in her own language without syntax, involved sentences and unfamiliar words delaying her translations.

The Melanesians are a very oral people and set great store in fine storytelling. A nod harking back to 13th Century Italy with a splendid oral tradition itself.

In 2010 I attended Chapter at which Brother Ambrose from Melanesia put out a heartfelt plea for more simple material that would be suitable for Novices and Tertiaries alike in Melanesia, all of whom spoke English as a second language, some as a third or fourth. Many had had only a rudimentary education as well.

My time to shine, I thought. This was something I could do well and I had many of the stories all ready to go, that I had done for Betsy.

I was working on a simplified set of *The Principles for Melanesia in Plain English* for which I was assembling a collection of prayers to be included.

At the same time, I read various versions of *The Little Flowers of St Francis* or the floregium and decided to concentrate for *The Francis Stories* on the tales that most novices get to know and love. In this book there are 21 stories from the leper, the wolf, and the preaching to the birds to the more challenging cabbages, the hungry friar and Brother Fly.

Rose continues: Along with this is a chronology of St Francis, a short essay on his life and one on his end days, and two stories of St Clare. I concentrated on the prayers of the saint himself in this book and I didn't attempt to simplify these.

I was especially charmed by the way that one Victorian writer of *The Little Flowers* used the phrase 'In Which Such and Such Happens' which I used for my chapter headings as well. A device that worked well in adding a little gravitas and excitement to each new topic.

The illustrator, John, was the young teenage son of Betsy, my Novice. He seemed keen to be involved and I was very impressed with the first few pictures that he drew for me. I commissioned the rest and a member of the Auckland TSSF Group made sure he was recompensed for his time and dedication to this project. Subsequent books have been illustrated by my son, Rowan.

Twenty-five years of teaching English as a second language to refugees and new immigrants in a community setting in West Auckland was good preparation for this. All of my writing for the Melanesians was in plain English. This means using a limited vocabulary - up to a reading age of 9 years, short sentences and easy to understand ideas. This absolutely doesn't mean that things written in plain English are only for people who don't read English very well. On the contrary. It is accessibility for all and offers a new way of looking at familiar concepts. A win-win!

A delightful discovery for me was that the Melanesians are well versed in religious language so I left concepts like the Blood of The Lamb, Atonement and the Holy Spirit well alone!

The Francis Stories 2015 came first, followed by *The Principles in Plain English with The Community Obedience* 2015. Then *Followers of Francis* 2017 and *Six Short Plays* 2019. *Exploring the Bible* was self-published in 2020.

Followers of Francis

After writing *The Francis Stories* I wanted to write about some of the most famous Franciscans, both First and Second Orders as well as Third Order to tell the story of the Franciscan Order through the centuries. I had already told the stories of Francis himself, Brother Bernard, Brother Matteo, Brother Silvester and Brother Juniper in *The Francis Stories* which is why they are not included in *The Followers*. My son, Rowan, did the drawings of *The Followers* as though they were in stained-glass windows. The Melanesians are great colourists and do some extraordinary art in religious contexts, so we included paints and crayons with every parcel of books in the hope that some books would become works of art in their own right.

Six Short Plays.

These were great fun to write and could be used in a variety of ways. Among the subjects were The Leper, The Wolf of Gubbio, Clare's story and The Death of Francis.

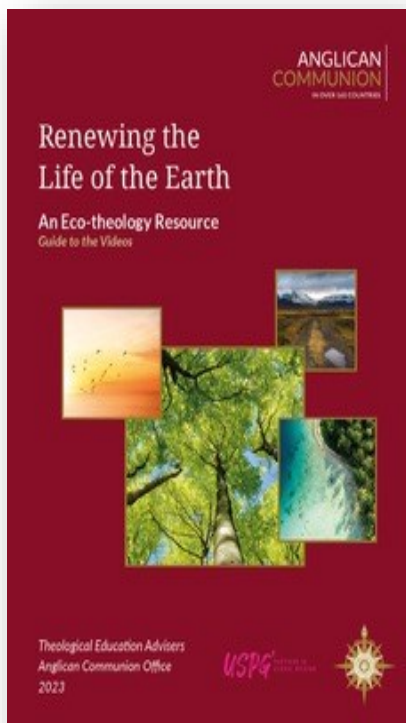
Exploring The Bible.

The idea for this book came from a very tiny Victorian tract that a friend gave me. It contained a paragraph on every book in the Bible and I thought this was an excellent place to start in plain English. Because what I wanted to do was give the biblical references for the major stories in the Bible and in the foreword I told the story of Francis hearing the Gospel. My son also did the illustrations for this book.

These books including *The Principles in Plain English* were written specifically for Tertiaries and Novices of the Third Order in Melanesia. I believe these books have been used in other parts of the world where English is a second Language which is pleasing to know. The Auckland Group of about 30 people and the New Zealand-wide Order did some serious fundraising for publishing and printing costs. We also asked all Third Order Franciscans to buy a copy or copies of both *The Francis Stories* and *The Principles in Plain English* so that we could send copies free of charge to Melanesia. Amazing generosity enabled lots of small parcels and several boxes of these books - postage paid was on top of this by the same giving people - to be sent of both books over a couple of years. We followed the same template with the subsequent books which has been a fabulous success in paying for the printing of thousands of these books. There hasn't been a huge amount of money made but what there is, is put back into similar projects. But every tertiary and novice in Melanesia has access to, and in many cases actually owns, five books about St Francis written in plain English. This was indeed a labour of love and has been immensely satisfying. Most of these books are still available by contacting me at the email below, stock permitting. They are \$10 each plus postage and packing.

Blessings and Peace, **Rose Christie-French**

14 Drummond Drive, Ranui, Auckland 0612, rosechristiefrench@gmail.com



Eco-theology

For the last few years, I've been part of a small working group for TEAC or Theological Education for the Anglican Communion, putting together a resource. It is a video-based resource with voices and insights from people all around the world who are working in this area. There are some truly brilliant voices in there, including Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon, George Zachariah, Jacynthia Murphy and Jessica Hughes. It was launched at ACC in Accra on Monday February 13th. It's available on the Anglican Communion website <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/theological>

I can send you a copy if you are interested.

ecolgan@trinitycollege.ac.nz

Emily Colgan

Dear God,

We loosen our grip.
We open our hand.
We are accepting.
In our hand
We feel the shape
Of simple eternity.
It nestles there.
We hold it gently.
We are accepting.

Amen.

Michael Leunig



Environmental destruction in the Solomon Islands

Brothers of the [Society of Saint Francis \(SSF\)](#) and [Sisters of the Church \(CSC\)](#) will use 2023 to take a stand against rampant industrial logging in the Solomon Islands. This unsustainable practice has affected all aspects of life for communities living near by the logging sites. This year, the two religious orders will embark on a series of new mission projects to strengthen the awareness and resiliency of local communities. Working closely with [Catholic Dominican sisters and friars](#), they will also take the issue of logging to the international community and raise it at the United Nations. In an upcoming report, they will examine whether promises made by the Solomon Islands government to address the negative impacts of logging have been kept.

This work builds on the deep roots of the SSF, the CSC, and the Dominican Order in the Solomon Islands. It is further informed by a series of focus-group discussions in six villages across Guadalcanal Island that this ecumenical alliance conducted in October 2022. These in-depth conversations laid bare the real and daily impacts of logging, which too often remain hidden.

The real costs of logging

Without exception, the communities who traditionally rely on the forest and sea and their resources, reported severe disruptions caused by logging: streams have been polluted or blocked, deforestation is causing a rise in temperatures which in turn affects agriculture, the barges used to collect logs have damaged coral reefs and fishing grounds, and invasive species are threatening their crops.

The destruction of livelihoods is made worse by the appearance of invasive species – the Giant African Snail and Rhinoceros Beetle – that were likely introduced into the island's ecosystem by heavy logging equipment and now devastate local agriculture and cash crops alike.

But the impacts run deeper: the influx of foreign workers has fuelled **domestic trafficking**, as loggers unofficially marry girls and young women in exchange for financial support or gifts to their families. Oftentimes, these women and children are abandoned when the loggers return home.

"Normally, girls in this country should not get married before they turn 18. However, because girls can get legally married at 15 there is no protection if the family needs the money," says Sister of the Church Veronica Vasethe, whose community provides shelter to women who have been abandoned.
"The government does not protect our girls."

Meanwhile, promises of development made by the logging companies, such as improving infrastructure or the establishment of schools and clinics, have mostly not been kept. This has led to a loss of trust in traditional leaders, blamed for these broken promises.

From the grassroots to the United Nations

Franciscan brothers have taken their fight against this destruction to the international community with the support of [Franciscans International](#). They raised the issue of logging during the [2020 Universal Periodic Review of the Solomon Islands](#). Under this mechanism, the human rights records of all UN member states are examined on a rotating basis.

At the end of this process, the government made promises related to logging to improve the situation of local communities. The focus-groups make it clear that these benchmarks have not been met. Franciscans International will use evidence gathered to raise the damage caused in the Solomon Islands with the UN.

The Sisters of the Church have become active partners in this coalition and together with the Franciscan brothers are discerning what action to take at the local level. We heard that people lacked accurate knowledge about the effects of logging. If people living in villages knew what logging would bring, then they mightn't have assented to it. The Sisters of the Church and the Franciscan brothers are considering using that means to communicate and make vivid the potential effects of logging.

Another area is education in human rights. Training in the October workshop has given the people skills and confidence in interviewing and conducting focus groups which will continue to be useful in supplying data for monitoring future changes.

Logging is only one of the concerns the religious communities are taking on as part of their environmental mission. The Anglican Church of Melanesia has a programme of developing local environmental observatories. This initiative was developed with the assistance of the Melanesian Mission UK at a pilot stage and is now being expanded throughout the whole church. The Franciscan brothers will be hosting and operating the environment observatory to be set up at their friary on Temotu. These observatories record long-term data on local climate and coastal changes. This data will be freely accessible to all. The very presence of these observatories has an additional local effect of generating interest in climate and the changes which can be observed. Franciscans International made a submission to the newly established UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change, using the information from Anglican Community of Melanesia

or ACOM. Freda Fataka and Marie Schlenker observed how climate change has triggered the displacement of people from Ontong Java Islands to Honiara, and the submerging of Walande in south Malaita and Fanalei Island by rising sea levels.

Franciscans and Sisters of the Church in the Solomon Islands

A key factor in these efforts are the deep roots of both the Franciscans and the Sisters of the Church in the Solomon Islands, stretching back five decades. The brothers and sisters themselves are local and some are part of the affected communities, providing a foundation of trust and a commitment to a long-term engagement. These efforts dovetail with the larger commitment of the Anglican Church to the environment. This commitment stems from the 5th of the *Five Marks of Mission* of the Anglican Communion, "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth." To Care for creation is not an optional extra, but an integral part of our vocation as Christians. This was given concrete shape at the 2022 Lambeth Conference when the Communion Forest initiative was launched. "The Communion Forest is a global initiative comprising local activities of forest protection, tree growing, and eco-system restoration undertaken by provinces, dioceses and individual churches across the Anglican Communion to safeguard creation."

For more information, interviews and additional photos, please contact:

Christopher John SSF

Minister-General, Society of Saint Francis

mingenssf@firstorderssf.org

Veronica Vesathe CSC

Provincial, Sisters of the Church

veronica@sistersofthechurch.org

A selection of photos is available at <https://bit.ly/3ViROug>

For Your Diary

Next Chapter, 25 to 27 August 2023 at Vaughan Park, Auckland

Area Retreats: Please let us know as other members may wish to join you

Chapter 2024, 1 to 3 October, at Vaughan Park

Convocation 3-6th October, Vaughan Park

National Retreat

2025 or 2026, to be discussed at Chapter 2024