

TAU NOVEMBER 2021

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



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The statue in our cover photo is hidden away in the garden of the church next to the Bishop's Palace in Assisi. It depicts Francis in the moments after he renounced his worldly father in favour of his heavenly one by handing back his fine clothes.

Website - tssf.org.nz Please check the website regularly for updated Intercession and Address lists.

Please send any articles that would interest us about your area events or other Franciscan happenings in time for the next issue to

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The next Tau is due out at the end of February 2022

Please send me your stories, etc by Friday 18th February.

Advent Reflection

from Rt Rev Steven Benford, Bishop Proctor Aotearoa NZ

I find the rhythm of the Church Seasons to be a reassuring reminder of stability. Especially in a world that can so easily be thought of as being caught up in a maelstrom of speed. But within the comfort and safety of this pattern I need to be ready for whatever it is God is calling me to. As Advent comes once again to us I was reminded how all the seasons invite us to look at our faith, and where we stand with God; and some of them, like Advent, come with a louder call to simply *stop*!

I was at a Zoom meeting recently of the Diocesan Trust Board. While there were seven faces zooming in on screens, there were three of us – the Chair of the Trust Board, the Diocesan Accountant and me – meeting in person in the Office Board Room. I say three of us, there was actually a fourth presence – my dog Marley was also “in attendance”. (She is not allowed to vote, but does exercise occasional speaking rights, if a door-bell rings for example.) This time she was very quiet, but she did step on the floor switch of the power supply to the computer, and in mid-debate the hui was temporarily suspended as the three of us were removed from the korero.



According to the bible God spoke to Balaam through the mouth of a donkey, and I wonder if God was speaking to me through the paw of a dog: asking me how ready am I to simply stop? Because in reality it was surprisingly easy...

There have been many great and worthy themes associated with Advent, and by ignoring any of them we dilute or diminish our understanding of faith. But foundational to all of them, Advent reminds us again of the *coming* of Jesus Christ. Now with the arrival of anyone to anything there is usually a cessation to some extent of what we are doing in order to react to the event. Even if we simply open the door to answer the door-bell we have stopped what we were doing to achieve this; whereas when a long planned community event comes to fruition the many hours of preparation that precede it, completed or not, come to an end: the work of preparation has stopped. In my own life, increasingly I find myself being asked to be aware of

God's call to me, and to set aside times when I can, even when I must, stop. Stop doing and simply **be**, and to allow God to do what God has in mind.

In the looking for the coming of the Messiah as described in the bible I get the impression that very few were completely ready for it. Mary and Joseph had been given some insights through the visit of the Angel Gabriel, and the profound dreams. Mary's visit to Elizabeth and the prophetic insights given to and by Elizabeth would have helped, and there is nothing like a pregnancy to make us aware of changes ahead. Even so, after the passage of time, the profundity of the angelic and the miraculous can seem a little distant when you're away from home and labour pains begin. And into this churned up world that included military occupation, refugees and deep uncertainty, God came.

Perhaps the animals that donated the manger were the closest to understanding what on earth was going on...

Can we find some time this Advent and Christmas to stop? To stop what we are doing, and to marvel at all that God is doing?

With my love and prayers

+Steven

Political unrest in the Solomon Islands

To 1st, 2nd and 3rd Orders

You might have seen in the news of riots in Honiara. There is considerable opposition to the prime minister and the policies he has pushed of benefitting foreign companies (especially China) in natural resource allocation and other "development" projects. This has spread from Malaita (where the protest movement has had considerable energy) to Honiara. Australia is sending some federal police and defence force personnel to assist with riot control.

Our brothers are safe at Pattenon House (as are the other religious orders in Honiara). They are praying for peace and offering shelter to some in fear of their lives. Yesterday the riots were strong around parliament house – which is very near Pattenon House. Today the focus has moved more eastwards in Honiara towards Henderson.

Please pray for peace in the Solomons and a peaceful solution to the current situation.

Pace e bene! Christopher John - Minister General SSF

From the Minister Provincial...

Advent greetings. Just prior to writing to you all we have set up at home our 5 Advent candles and readied some words and studies for each day as we prepare for this season. Doing this has made me reflect and acknowledge the tough times which everyone has faced in so many different ways over the past year. So of course we look forward to a New Year full of hope and changes for the better, Not just for ourselves but also for those we serve and give hope to as Franciscans.



I would also like to recognise how much time many of you put into the various tssf roles throughout our community and thank you on behalf of everyone for your contributions, efforts and prayers which help bind us together in our dispersed way.

Let us join together at this season of celebration and focus on all the good which is being done by so many, how fortunate we are in Aotearoa NZ, to pray for our Franciscan family in the Solomon Islands - Melanesia, for renewal for us all over the summer, and most of all to share in whatever ways we can the ultimate love that both calls us and unites in following Francis and Clare.

I quote from the Principles, day seven, " we accept as our second aim the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. We are pledged to fight against ignorance, pride and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind"

May you truly know the gentle touch of God's love for you this season as you reach out to others

Peace

Blair Matheson



"Remember these? There are still some available for \$10.00 plus postage \$2.00. A number of people find them useful when they are not wearing a profession cross. They are not an "official" badge of belonging, so are able to be worn by others, not just members of tssf, so that includes postulants and novices. They attract comment so are often an opening to share one's faith in a gentle way.

Contact Marion Fairbrass, formationtssfpacific@gmail.com to purchase."

From the Formation Director...

It is a privilege and joy to be involved in the initial formation process with those who are discerning a call to TSSF. There has been a steady trickle of Enquirers, many becoming Postulants. Currently there are thirteen individuals across New Zealand in this group of Enquirers and Postulants.

We also have several new members: Jeremy Glasier (Portiuncula Area), Dot Muir, Anne Russell-Brighty, Lynn Kim (Southern Area) have all become Novices. There are a few more pending, too.

At Chapter this year there was one Novice elected to Profession: Margaret Poynton (Gubbio Area). Margaret is currently in Papua New Guinea on mission work with ABM. The plan is that there will be a Zoom service in February 2022, with Margaret being supported as she makes her profession vows, by a member of the First Order SFF.

I valued the opportunity to speak with Area Chaplains and all Novice Counsellors at the beginning of October, and to be part of the Zoom meetings for Chapter. One thing which really resonated was a statement from our Minister General, John Hebenton. He reminded us that when someone is on a discernment journey to find out whether they believe God is calling them to belong to our order, the answer will not always be a "yes". If that is the case, then we have not "lost them". They have found the answer to the question they were asking. Not everyone is called to join an Order. The way we talk about these brothers and sisters needs to reflect that and show respect for their discernment.

Marion Fairbrass
Formation Director.

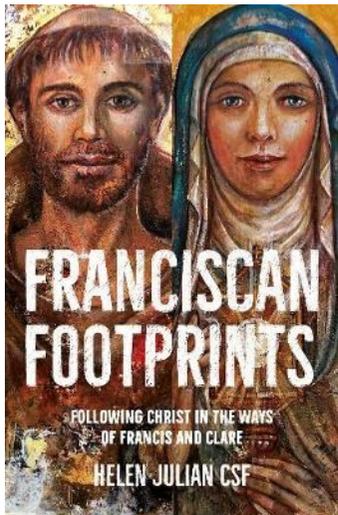
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"Welcome to our new members in the Solomon Islands: these people were admitted as Novices on 5.10.2021.....Johnson Hiu, Alison Kaera, John Kala, Eddie Kasutee, Patrick Kona, Elijah Ini, and Nathaniel Niau.

These people became Professed Members on 5 10.21.....Arthold Matangani, Ashwin Siapu, Rickson Samo, Catherine Manira, Paul Kafole, and John William Haka.

Congratulations to them all. "

*Information from Sam Faga, Solomon Islands Regional Formation Director.*



## Book Review

### Franciscan Footprints by Sr. Helen Julian

In memory of Sr. Helen Julian with whom I was a novice in CSF for several years I purchased a copy on my kindle and now wished I had a hard copy that I could hand on....

That is the kind of book she has written. You will want everyone who is a friend of Francis and Clare, a follower of SSF/CSF/TSSF /Community of St. Clare /FI (Franciscans International) to read it.

It is first and for most an historical document.

Helen's detective approach and eye for detail throughout brings to life the followers of Francis

and Clare tracing the stories of not only our Founders but also thinkers, mystics, martyrs, missionaries and those whose passion was for social justice. Many of whom found a home within the Third Order. She propels us forward with her inclusion of FI (Franciscan International).

Maybe I am biased since I can almost hear Helen Julian reading it to me, her nuances, intonations and occasional wry giggle captures her spirit and dedication to CSF over 3 decades.

Helen Julian gifts us a legacy, what is clearly our whakapapa, a road map of where we have come from. By way of invitation she offers us a beautiful question on page 15, 'what is yours to do'? So succinctly are a series of questions at the end of each chapter and a source for all of us to sit in prayer with.

I hope that we here in TSSF Aotearoa gift everyone who enquires about a copy of this book (happy to fund it!). It is jam packed with Bibliography for further reading. A comprehensive section of websites and a complete index of all the Franciscans that she has named in the book.

Thomas of Celano quoting Francis as he approached his death, 'I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours to do'. A question Helen Julian invites us to pray with and which has been the inspiration that we as TSSF Aotearoa have so identified with, "What is ours to do?"

Don't buy one copy by at least 2!

Maranu Gasoigne

## Gathering of Portiuncula Tertiaries and Companions

At St Luke's Anglican Church, Havelock North on Sunday 3rd October at 4pm the Portiuncula group ( formerly NIC, North Island Central) gathered for the Transitus of St Francis to renew vows, share communion and to novice Jeremy Glasier from Marton.

We were warmly hosted by Archdeacon John and Susan Matthews.

Rev Dorothy Brooker from Napier presided over a simple meaningful service round a warm circle in the sanctuary, with companions. The zoomed service enabled Maranu Gascoigne from St Isaacs in the Hokianga, and Ava Gardner from Palmerston North, to join us.

Those present were Bryan and Rosemary Carey, from Hastings, Claudia Mason, Judy Butler from Waipawa, Nettie Gardner from Haumoana and Raechell Bennett from Havelock North. Companions were Patrick Dingemans, Richard Harris, and Bill and Wendy Bennett. Anne Buckner was also present and asked to be admitted as a companion, which she was a couple of weeks later at St Luke's.

We continued to enjoy fellowship together over dinner afterwards at the 'Off the tracks' restaurant.

Knowing the Holy Spirit can work over the airwaves enables all of us to remain in companionship with one another but when we can and do gather, we can appreciate the fellowship even more!

Rosemary Carey 22nd November, 2021.

Henry Ford wrote, 'When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it!' Trust that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

Every day we have opportunities to reconnect with God through an encounter with nature, whether an ordinary sunrise, a starling on a power line, a tree in a park, or a cloud in the sky. *Richard Rohr*

## **50 Years of the Society of St Francis in the Solomon Islands**

For the SSF 50th Anniversary, I will just be brief since I did not keep track of all the activities for the 3 days program from 1st October 2021 to 3rd October 2021.

The 3 days program of the 50th Anniversary celebrations started on Friday 1st October 2021 with a 10 km march from Selwyn College to Little Portion Friary, Hautambu led by Solomon Islands Royal Police Band. The following groups participated in the march: SSF Brothers, TSSF Brothers & Sisters, SSF Companions, Melanesian brothers, Melanesian Sisters, Sisters of the Church, Dominican Catholic sisters, relatives of late Br Michael Davis from Ugi Island where the SSF friary was first established when it reached Solomon Islands in year 1970. Late brother Michael Davis from Ugi Island was one of the first Solomon Islander to join the Society of St. Francis. The total number of people participated is about a thousand. It was a fine and beautiful morning that the march took place and thereafter the celebration was opened with a word of prayer by Reverend John Coleridge Patteson, a professed TSSF member and declared opened by SSF Bishop Protector: Rt Reverend Rickson Maomaoru.

Second day, Saturday 2nd October 2021, Martin and Eucharist, breakfast and then brothers, companions and associates prepare food for the anniversary celebration on Sunday, 3rd October 2021. In the evening after evensong, entertainments from different groups were performed.

Third day, Sunday 3rd October 2021, a morning Eucharistic Service was conducted at an open chapel at holy ground surrounded by nature. A beautiful and blessed scenario indeed at Laverna Friary. A novice SSF brother was admitted to the life profession during the service. Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia. Most Rt Reverend Leonard Daiwo celebrated and shared the word of God. After the Eucharistic service, breakfast, feasting, speeches and entertainment were carried out which lasted up to 4pm in the evening. The event was a joyous and rememberable one where some of us are so fortunate to be part of it as the next one to be celebrated will be its century where younger and new generations will celebrate it.

After the celebration, TSSF members conducted an admission and renewal service for all members who were present on 5th October 2021 at All Saints Church, Honiara. After the service, all TSSF members left for their different

areas by boat and land transport. We TSSF members here in the Solomon Islands wish to render our sincere thanks for the financial support from the Provincial Office in NZ that enables us to attend and contribute towards our Society of St. Francis 50th Anniversary which TSSF is part of since it was first established here in the Solomon Islands 50 years ago.

Thanks and Glory be to God!  
Peace and All Goodness  
Jimmy Maeigoa





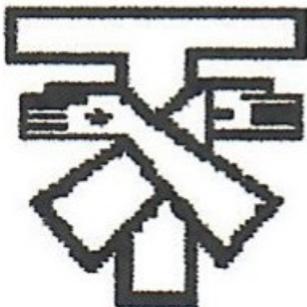
More photos on back page



## *Companions Corner*

*Welcome to the Companions who have got back in touch with me. This is your page or extra pages if you want in the future! Please send me your comments or stories of your journeys, etc.*

*If you know of other Companions who would like to have more contact with others please share this newsletter with them and ask them to be put in touch with me so I can put them on the mailing list.*



*Companions promise to be a faithful Companion to all of Creation and its Creator, and in particular to the Sisters and Brothers of the Society of Saint Francis?*

*Companions promise to pray for them, holding their communities, their daily lives, and all those with whom they come into contact, in the all-encompassing Love of God?*

*Companions continue to find ways to share the unity, love, joy and life which God holds out to us in Christ, just as Francis did?*

# Sacred Kingfisher

## An Advent Reflection

by Maranu Gascoigne Kaitiaki St. Isaacs Retreat House. November 2021

Before you read on please pause a moment or two and notice your breath. Take time to really feel and notice the breath breathing within you. Go a step further and notice that you have no control over this breath, this ruach (breath) of God is breathing in you.

Much has been written during the past year, whether it's 'I can't breathe' because someone has their foot on your neck or "I can't breathe' because of the debilitating disease known as Covid 19. Before either of these events people were saying, "I can't breathe' because of the air pollution. Closer to home our Tane Mahuta is crying out, ' I can't breathe'.

There will always be situations that choke, suffocate or diminish our Qi (chi) vital life force. Can you recall a moment when you have been winded and gasped the words, 'I can't breathe'.

Recently my path crossed this kingfisher perched low to the ground, going nowhere. I sat with the kingfisher for a long time. The next day I found the bird dead breathing had ceased. Lifeless, I picked up the feathered creature and laid it in a grave.



'In the evening of life we will be judged on love alone' – St. John of the Cross

A kingfisher, is said to be the first bird to fly from Noah's ark, receiving the orange of the setting sun on its breast in ( Northern Hemisphere) and the blue of the sky on its back. It is considered to be the symbol of Christ.

Gerard Manley Hopkins treats us to a splendid Christological encounter in his poem

## As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame.

*As Kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;  
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's  
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
Selves – goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,  
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.*

*I say more: the just man justices;  
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;  
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is –  
Christ – for Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.*

*Gerard Manley Hopkins*

Hopkins invites us to pay attention to the optical images of kingfisher and the iridescent wings of dragonfly. He also encourages us to listen to the tinkling sound of pebbles tossed down wells, the plucking of strings on a musical instrument, and the ringing of bells as the 'bow' swings like a pendulum to strike the metal inside.

Christ, like the kingfisher who symbolizes him, is the only uniter of opposites, especially the opposites of mortality and immortality. Christ dwells everywhere – 'lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes'.

We are forced to truly face our own mortality. In doing so we can draw on this profound truth, 'our immortality in Christ'.



“you give me a brief span of time; before you my days are nothing. People are but a breath:” – Psalm 39: 6

We share the earth, we share the breath. What unites us is that we are all God's ruach. All feathers of the one bird's breast.

Let our Advent call be for renewed breath in God. As Hopkins asks that we 'keep grace'. Seeing each other through the eyes of God.

As you journey through Advent, keep a watchful eye for the...



blue winged Kingfisher   shimmering dragonfly   drop a pebble in water   listen to a stringed instrument

At Christmas eve sound a resounding bell to herald the divine indwelling of grace and the babe of Bethlehem.



The spirit of Emmanuel – God with us.

# Prayer for the Earth

Sinking our roots in our native place on this fertile Earth, but with the larger perspective of the cosmic common good, may we become like the righteous, “like a tree planted near streams of water, that yields its fruit in season,” whose “leaves never wither,” and that “whatever [we do] prospers” (Psalm 1:3–4). May the larger perspective of the cosmic common good inspire us to live and to work for the good of all members of this vast and wondrous cosmos:

for the poor, the vulnerable, and all those imperiled;  
for the contexts in which creatures flourish, and for the greater wholes of  
    which they are a part;  
for the order in creatures, by which they glorify the Creator;  
for the good that creatures provide to other creatures;  
for the good of the order of creatures, by which the cosmos is sustained;  
for the emergent universe and the communion of subjects;  
for the solidarity that binds us to all creatures;  
for the promotion of justice for all creatures;  
for the sacred that lies in the innermost being in all creatures;  
for greater nonviolence and peace;  
for the interdependence that shines like a jewel within all creatures;  
for all of our relations above, below, and around us;  
and for the land and this plot of Earth by which creatures come to discover  
    the cosmos at home.

Daniel P. Scheid, *The Cosmic Common Good: Religious Grounds for Ecological Ethics* (Oxford University Press: 2016), 181–182.

## ***The Third Aim: To live simply.***

**The Third Aim of the Order is to live simply.** I guess in some ways it must be easier for me now. I have been living this way, in prison, for over 20 years, and there isn't much I have left in the world but my love of God and some very wonderful friends. Yet even in here, life can get cluttered. And, in here, most clutter is certainly not good. I am surrounded every day by a neurotic need for the attention of others, a constant fear of nonbeing, and endless, disparaging noise.

Practicing simplicity, for me, is not just a matter of not having things but rather living a life uncluttered by unnecessary or less worthy things, allowing more time, space, and energy for matters of greater priority. Simplicity then becomes not just a matter of things given away or denied but of amazing gifts freely given and accepted. One of the greatest gifts simplicity offers me may be a clearer discernment to see what really matters most, and the part I can play in that context.

Practicing simplicity can help strengthen:

our dependence on God (delivering us from dependence on ourselves, our money, or other people),

our obedience to God (delivering us from obedience to our egos, pride or possessions),

our focus on God (delivering us from the world's distractions).

Dependence, obedience, and focus on God: these three disciplines, strengthened by the practice of simplicity, can help move us into a deeper sense of freedom:

from others (their control, opinions),

from ourselves (our delusions, desires, ego, sins, fears),

from the world (its idolatry, greed, manipulation).

And finally, we become free to serve God and God's people:

through the generosity of our goods, time, and self,

through work for social justice and peace,

through the evangelism of example,  
through clear discernment of the Holy Spirit,  
through humility, as the true understanding of who and what we are.

These deeper freedoms are what I refer to as the gifts of simplicity, through which the Holy Spirit can help guide us and free us to better serve our ministry. To serve God and God's people, in humility, is a call we have accepted. Through the practice and with these gifts of simplicity we may better progress past the allure of our delusions and the delusions of the world to a clearer discernment of our calling.

*Written by John Cooper. Taken from the Franciscan Times, Spring Lent 2021*

## FRUITS OF THE PANDEMIC!

When we were in the desert oppressed, we "cried" out for deliverance. When we crossed the Red Sea, we "complained" there was no meat, no water, no veggies. Then came manna, quail, and water from the rock.

Then we got "creative," we learned a new way to live. We are never going back. AND that's ok.

I learned that I am not alone in the isolation and spiritual starvation for community celebration of Holy Eucharist. I learned that while I may have suffered something in the past "going around the mountain as they say," this time the Holy Spirit asked to look and see who was on the road with me - and I have to stop crying out for deliverance and complaining about God's provision and become situation-ally creative.

Dianne Lowe - taken from the Franciscan Times Spring 2021

## **Francis' Rule of 1221**

**In this year of 2021 we could perhaps celebrate the 800th anniversary of the approval of the Rule governing the friars at the Pentecost Chapter of 30 May 1221; but the story of this Rule is more complicated than a one-off date.**

It really began on 16 April 1208 when Francis, Bernard and Peter looked for inspiration and guidance in the Gospels. They randomly found three texts, 'If you want to be perfect, go sell all you have and give to the poor'; 'Take nothing with you on your journey', and 'He that will come after me let him deny himself'. We are told that Francis declared joyfully 'This, my brothers is our Life and Rule and that of all those who shall wish to join our society.'

In 1209 Francis and the first few brothers took their Rule, probably no more than a few gospel texts, to Rome for its confirmation by Pope Innocent III. This he did, but unfortunately we do not have the text of this Rule, often called the Primitive Rule. This Rule grew through the needs and experiences of the brothers, of increasing numbers, and of the need for this new way of life to organise itself and to be accepted by the authorities. Bits were added and it gradually grew into what would ultimately be known as the 'Regula non Bullata', the Rule without Papal authorisation, the Rule of 1221. That Primitive Rule was not lost, as most scholars believe that it can be found embedded in the 1221 Rule. Franciscan scholars explored and removed the later additions of the twelve years to 1221. One of those researchers was John Moorman, an Anglican Bishop who, in the mid-twentieth century, carefully showed us the roots of the 1221 Rule.

That early Rule was a dynamic document that developed with time. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and its legislation had to find a place. Growth in numbers resulted in the need for chapters, ministers and provinces. Francis' mission to Damietta and the Sultan in 1219 left us with a whole chapter on the expected behaviour of 'those going among the Saracens and other non-believers.' These and many more are the sort of legislation one would expect in a Rule, but there are quite a few sections that might be questioned.

Several times Francis breaks off and inserts a prayer to God, or enthusiastic praise of God. One whole chapter of Prayer and Thanksgiving fills five pages

in the modern translation. In the final chapter in the Rule we find Francis pleading with his brothers to 'practise these things.' He invokes the authority of God and the Pope that no-one add or delete anything from the Rule.

Here is perhaps why the Rule of 1221 only lasted until 1223. It had not been approved since 1209. The Pentecost 1221 Chapter, which could have sent the then-current Rule for approval, did not do so, for which a number of reasons have been put forward. One, certainly, is that it was not like other major Orders' Rules, and also, perhaps not juridical enough. Another, who would expect to find in a Rule pages of prayers? Anyway, within a year Francis was called on to rewrite the Rule, thus giving us the Rule of 1223, which became the Papally approved Rule.

If you want to see history at work and to get a feeling for Francis, then I recommend a reading of the Rule of 1221.

*Written by Austin SSF and presented in The Franciscan September 2021*

## ***Be simple today.***

*Simplicity is like a breath of fresh air.  
In the midst of the busy, complicated world,  
be the smile that brightens someone's day.*

*Be the unexpected kind word.  
Be the small act of generosity that gives hope.  
Be the laugh that lightens a burden.*

*Simple acts of goodwill cut through darkness  
and bring love.*

*So just for today, simply be simple.  
What a blessing you will be in the world*



Six members were admitted profess who posed in front of the Altar of All Saint's Church