



Secular Franciscan Order

South East Region



*Building the Kingdom of God
with Living Stones*

ISSUE 21 – EASTER 2016

A PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

Book of Hours – Noon (Sext)

To the Lord I cry out my plea,
to the Lord I cry out my entreaty.
I pour out my prayer in his presence,
in his presence I unfold my troubles.
However faint my spirit,
you watch over my path.
On the road I have to travel,
they have laid a trap for me.
I look to the right and see –
no one cares if I live or die.
Since for you I bear insult,
my face is covered with shame.
I am estranged from my brothers,
alienated from my mother's sons.
Because, Holy Father,
I am eaten up with zeal for your house,
the insults directed at you fall on me.
Gladly they ganged up together,
these scourges had ganged up together
against me, but I did not realise.
Those who hate me for no reason
now outnumber the hairs on my head.
My enemies wrongfully persecuting me
have grown too strong for me.
Must I give back what I did not steal?
False witnesses come forward, asking me questions I cannot answer.
They reply my good with evil, they slander me for following a righteous path.
You are my most Holy Father, my King and my God.
Come quickly to my help, Lord God my Saviour.



Dear brothers and sisters ...

We again find ourselves in this precious time of lent. It is cold. It is still winter but by the time you receive this it will be spring and what a wonderful time that is; a time for new beginnings, new growth, new life. I suppose in this time we are like the plants under the ground in the dark working on what is within us in order to bear new shoots, new fruits, in the light.

I am currently reading a book called "To be Honest" by Janet Fife (1993) and it has got me thinking about the link between being honest and mercy. Honesty is an interesting thing because we can often think that we are honest people, especially being Christian, and that we don't tell lies for example but this façade of honesty is a persona that we allow others to see, but underneath it all there is something completely different going on.

Depending on how much we reflect on ourselves, and how we respond to the world around us, we may have a greater or lesser knowledge of our own selves and of what others see in us and how they perceive our honesty and truth. It can be as though our inner being is constructed in layers, some of us make a wonderful hard shell around us with such beautiful decorations that nobody, not even we ourselves realise that there is another truth underneath. Sometimes it is not until a crisis hits us and the hard shell is shattered that we come face to face with what is inside, and it can be very frightening. But of course God sees us in our completeness. He sees the inner truth and the hard shell and all the layers in between and he wants us to share everything with him.

When we spend time looking at that truth that lies within us we are also able to get closer to God. When we talk to God about the things that we keep hidden inside, we get closer to him. He asks us to bring our burdens to him and allow him to carry them for us, but how often do we do that?

Lent is the perfect time for this. During lent when we make changes of our own volition through sacrifice we are able to see parts of ourselves that we have hidden under the shell and avoided looking at. The choices we make can seem simplistic to others because they don't see the workings of the inner world in relation to that change until later. A little like the plant that is germinating under the soil.

Sometimes of course we bite off more that we can chew. Last year I decided to give up plastic packaging, but quickly realised that it would mean a far more radical change than I felt able to achieve in one go, it would mean giving up the supermarket for a start, and how on earth would I buy shampoo! That is still a work in progress.

This time of year is also a time that we naturally think of mercy. It is from this perspective that I come to you to talk about our new National Seat. Our whole Order is in need of that Mercy that Jesus offers us and if we are to continue we must turn to the Lord for help.

Our National Fraternity has been talking for some time of the need for us to have a place somewhere in the United Kingdom where we can meet, store archives and generally be at home. The Conventual Franciscans have generously offered us a place to rent in Manchester that was formerly the printing works for the Crusader magazine, the magazine that was started by St. Maximilian Kolbe. What a blessing! However we need a waterfall of prayers for this venture; we need God's guidance wholeheartedly because without him we can do nothing. The little place which may become our Portiuncula is on the border between a "nice" shopping precinct, a classic symbol of our society today and a wasteland where people taking drugs gather. Those of us who have been a little more involved in this process believe that this new venture is something that is going to bring us closer to God, but in the way that trial and sacrifice does. So I am asking you not only for deep and ongoing prayer in this matter but also for sacrifice. In Fatima Our Lord said that sacrifice is the fulfilment of our duties in life and the observance of his law, it sounds so simple! If during lent we were able to make any sacrifice for this, what a blessing that would be.

This new building will be rented on a monthly basis. This will be an additional cost to the National fraternity. It would be wonderful if we could think of how we as individuals and fraternities can support this National Seat. Perhaps we could even make a regular contribution to support it financially. On 5th March our National Fraternity will meet together in this new place. Cordelia will go on behalf of our South East region and we are all looking forward to hearing how it has gone.



Pope Francis last week in Mexico said "I prefer a family with tired faces from generous giving to a family with make-up that know nothing of tenderness and compassion." So let us get to work on building a more fraternal and evangelical world...in the Christian spirit of service.

May God Bless each one of you xxx

Kathy Maskens

Regional Minister

SE REGION - FINANCIAL REPORT

The opening balance January 2015 £196.37.

Capitation 2015 at £24.00 per professed member.

Fraternity	Capitation	Professed	Infirm	Candidate	Enquirer
Ashford	£88.00	10	1	1	0
Croydon	£104.00	11	2	0	1
Croydon	£208.00 sent to National		1	0	1
Erith	£336.00	14	0	0	0
Hollington	£192.00	5	3	0	0
Total Capitation from local Fraternities to SE Regional Fraternity					---- £720.00
Total Capitation sent to GB National Fraternity at £16.00 per member					---- £410.67
Croydon sent £208.00 directly to National Fraternity.					
Total Capitation for SE Region is £309.00.					

Capitation 2016 at £24.00 per professed member.

Fraternity	Capitation	Professed	Infirm	Candidate	Enquirer
Ashford	£240.00	9	1	0	0
Croydon	£312.00	13	1	0	1
Erith	£288.00	10	1	1	2
Hollington	£144.00	5	1	0	1
Total Capitation from local Fraternities to SE Regional Fraternity					---- £984.00
Total Capitation sent to GB National Fraternity at £16.00 per member					---- £656.00
Total Capitation for SE Region in 2016 is £328.00.					

The February 2016 latest bank balance is £1000.71 which includes all capitation fees both for National and Regional fraternities.

Bank Balance minus National Cap = New Bank balance
 £1000.71 minus £656.00 = £344.71

OFS SE REGION – DATES FOR OUR DIARIES –2016

Saturday 2 April

Regional Gathering at Aylesford Friary: Divine Mercy & Door of Mercy

The Friars, Aylesford Kent ME20 7BX Note: Sat Nav: ME20 7BY
 10.00 am – 4.30 pm. Confessions, Mass, Adoration and Devotions

Monday 18 April

SER Council – West Malling

The Hermitage, West Malling, More Park, West Malling, Kent ME19 6HN
 1000 hrs Mass – 1530 departure

Fri 6 – Sun 8 May

Retreat: 'And I showed Mercy to them' led by Paula at Pantasaph, N Wales:
 £100 inclusive - " (Testament of St Francis). The first session will be on Pope Francis and the meaning of this year of mercy. The second session is on mercy in the Franciscan sources and the final session is on how we can make this year have meaning in our own lives.

Sun 5 – Sun 12 June

Pilgrimage: Assisi led by Paula

Sunday – 26 June

Croydon Day of Reflection – Emmaus Retreat Centre

Layhams Road, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9HH 020 8777 2000

Sat 2 July

Regional Gathering – Celebrating Franciscan Craft

The Hermitage, West Malling, More Park, West Malling, Kent ME19 6HN
 1000 hrs Mass – 1530 departure

Monday 11 July

SER Executive – West Malling

Saturday ?? October

Regional Gathering – venue etc tba

Monday 3 October

SER Council – West Malling



NATIONAL FRATERNITY NEWS

I have found it very busy since November. Most of my energy before Christmas was spent on the National Seat we have agreed to rent for this year. We are going to be asking members to help us pay for this project, either sponsoring or as a local fraternity. It costs us £10 per day. I have spent two sessions working at the premises in Barton, Manchester. I am accommodated by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of St Joseph, about 3 miles away.

The March meeting will be an opportunity for all regions to see and help decide on our use of the new National Seat. I will be based there for 3 days before the National Council meeting in March, only this time I am glad to say I can travel by train. I am looking forward to getting to see something of Manchester when I use public transport.

Previously I had taken the car to transport OFSGB archives, stock and resources. I envisage going there monthly for the time being.

It is important that members can access our records. It was not good that we have had to store things in members' homes in recent years. We are also now actively supporting the OFM Conv friars – after all the support from friars and sisters we have had over the years. All our First Order communities are decreasing in number so have less space as they have moved out of their large friaries. Therefore, we cannot depend on using their premises any more, nor can we expect premises to be free.

I have had quite a few responses to the questionnaires about the handbook but we will not be taking any decisions until the Summer. I will then let everyone know what emerges from the survey and what we are thinking about doing.

The new website will be a major item on the agenda at our National Council meeting. We would like to see every fraternity having someone who accesses this site for local members, as this is where we are inputting all the information you need. We want it to be used, but appreciate that new ways always take time. Roger has worked very hard at this and will always answer questions and offer help if needed.

Our National Executive met in February in Cold Ash where the sisters welcomed us as family, fed us well and joined us when it was practical. Everyone was able to attend including the 3 Spiritual Assistants who serve us faithfully. It was a very industrious time. Members continued working throughout some of the breaks. It made a difference that we had 3 days as we were not constrained nor were we exhausted. Travelling from all parts of the country for a single day meeting is tiring and minds cannot keep fresh for a whole day. There is no time to build fraternity either. Eleven is a good number for a meeting. Everyone could spend time with each of the executive and we were able to have meaningful discussions, both in the meeting and outside.

We watched the DVD "Finding St Francis" which we will be showing and discussing in July this year. It provoked a lively discussion and we have given thought as to how we best use this in the Order.

Paula ofs February 2016

All Saints, Barton, Manchester

All Saints at Barton, Manchester is where OFSGB now has its national seat. The church was built between 1865 and 1868. Cardinal Manning preached at the solemn opening in June 1868.

The Friars Minor Conventual have cared for the church, described as 'A Cathedral in miniature', since 1962. The church is listed as Grade 1 and is considered to be the chief work of the architect Edward Welby Pugin (son of the better known Augustus Pugin). It is a remarkably complete example of Victorian Catholic Church architecture in the Gothic style. The architectural historian, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner called it 'Pugin's masterwork'.



OFS SOUTH EAST REGION PILGRIMAGE: DIVINE MERCY & DOOR OF MERCY THE FRIARY, AYLESFORD



Welcome to Carmel

A meeting place and centre of Christian spirituality with a Carmelite community at its heart; a space where people of all ages and all faiths, or none, will find a welcome, where the sacred is expressed through prayer, the arts and nature.

Be still and know that I am God (Ps. 46:10)

This sharing as Brothers and Sisters of the OFS South East Region to celebrate The Year of Mercy is our first Gathering this year. And what a way to do so!! We hope so many of us will be able to share this day together.

The Divine Mercy pilgrimage will be in the Relic Chapel and starts at 9.30 am for Confessions, then 10.00 am Enthronement of the Image in the chapel, Prayers, Talk on Mercy etc. Mass is at 12 noon – Bishop Paul Hendricks presiding and concelebrants include Fr Andrew Divine - Mercy Chaplain from the Marian Fathers. Lunch (Tea Room, Pilgrims Hall, picnic areas etc). 2.30pm onwards there will be the Hour of Mercy devotions, Adoration, Benediction and finishing with Veneration of the Image and the Relics of St Faustina. Finishes approximately 4.30pm. Sat Nav address: ME20 7BY for site.

Many of us will have been to the Friary over the years for a variety of reasons - Our OFS presence as a Region is already known there as we have held gatherings and meetings over the years. They are happy to know we, as a region, will join with other Pilgrims on the special day of Divine Mercy and going through the Door of Mercy. It will be lovely to see as many of us as possible there on the day.

A little background to Aylesford Friary - The Carmelites first arrived at Aylesford in 1242 from Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, remaining there until 1538 - the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The Carmelites returned to their ancient home in 1949. Aylesford has been a place of pilgrimage since. The Shrine is dedicated to the Glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Simon Stock. Pilgrims are welcome all year round to join both the daily services of the Carmelite Community and the principal public services. This link has everything you may want to know: <http://www.thefriars.org.uk/>



The Jubilee of Mercy website says: The logo has been designed in such a way so as to express the profound way in which the Good Shepherd touches the flesh of humanity and does so with a love with the power to change one's life. One particular feature worthy of note is that while the Good Shepherd, in his great mercy, takes humanity upon himself, his eyes are merged with those of man. Christ sees with the eyes of Adam, and Adam with the eyes of Christ.

IN THE FINAL WEEK OF LENT COMES THE HOLY WEEK which is the most important week of the Church year. Holy Week is when the whole Church around the world commemorates the great event of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The first day of Holy Week is **Palm Sunday**, the triumphant entry of Christ, riding on a donkey into Jerusalem. We carry palm branches in procession as Mass begins and sing hymns such as "Hosanna in the Highest". All the statues and crucifixes are covered in purple to show that the Church is, in a sense, in mourning.



Holy Thursday - we remember the Last Supper when our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist. Most Dioceses celebrate the Chrism Mass on this day, otherwise it may be on the Wednesday. At Chrism Mass, the oils, to be used for anointing during the coming year, are blessed. *This day is a day to pray for Priests.* Holy Thursday is also called "Maundy Thursday". Maundy comes from a Latin, *mandatum*, which means command. Christ gave a new commandment to his Apostles after washing their feet. He said to them, "love one another as I have loved you". The washing of feet is still done in all the Catholic Churches around the world. All Parish Priests, including the Pope, wash the feet of twelve people during the Holy Thursday Mass of the Last Supper. At the start of the Gloria, all the bells in the Church are rung. They will not be heard again until they ring with the joy of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. As the Mass ends, the Blessed Sacrament is taken in procession to an Altar of Repose in a side chapel, specially decorated with flowers and candles. We can keep watch with Christ remembering His agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Meanwhile the main Altar of the church is completely stripped – the candles and the altar cloths are taken away. The Sanctuary lamp is snuffed out, everything is left bleak and bare. We are reminded of Christ being stripped of His garments when He was nailed to the Cross.

Good Friday - we celebrate the liturgy solemnly commemorating the passion and death of Christ, usually held at 3.00pm. It is understood that the passion of Christ took place at this hour. The liturgy begins with the Priest and the Deacon completely prostrating themselves in silence, on the sanctuary while the congregation all kneel in complete and humble submission to God. Part of the liturgy is the unveiling of the Cross and the veneration of the Cross by kissing it. The Passion of Christ is read from the Scripture after which the Holy Communion consecrated on Holy Thursday Mass is distributed. After Holy Communion, all depart in silence; there is no final hymn, no playing of organ and no ringing of bells.

Holy Saturday - the Church honours Christ in the Tomb. Everything is silent; the Mass is not celebrated. There is an air of expectation, the next day is the third day when as in the Creed Jesus rose from the dead. The Easter Vigil is one of the most dramatic events of the Churches year. The liturgy at Easter is the summit of the whole of the Churches liturgy. It is the central point on which the whole of our Faith is centred. It celebrates the most magnificent event of all history - **the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

The Vigil Night begins with the kindling of the Easter Fire outside the Church. Wood has been stacked in a brazier, and this is now lit and burns brightly in the darkness. We gather around it, each person holding a candle. The Easter Candle is brought forward, and as the vigil begins, grains of incense are inserted into the Candle with a special prayer – each of the grains representing one of the wounds of Christ. The Paschal Candle is lit from the Easter fire and is carried triumphantly into the Church with the Priest or Deacon singing "Lumen Christi!" and we respond "Deo Gratias!" three times. As the candles carried by the congregation are lit from the Paschal Candle and then goes from person to person around the Church; the darkness is dispelled. **Christ is risen, the Light has come.** Now the Deacon stands by the Paschal Candle and sings the "Exultet". The Baptismal Water is blessed and during the singing of the Gloria all the bells ring. Hymns with Alleluia are sung and the Adult Converts are Baptised, Confirmed and fully Received into the Church. We all renew our Baptismal promises and the Priest goes round and sprinkles us with Holy Water.

Easter Sunday: Although the Easter Vigil is one of the most magnificent events in the Church year and attendance obviously fulfil the Sunday Mass obligation, going to Mass on Easter Sunday morning is something very special!

Cordelia Rice ofs - Erith

100 CLUB - Helping to fund Franciscan activities

The 100 Club is now being actively promoted again. It can be an entertaining diversion, provide useful prizes for the winners, and it helps fund Franciscan activities in this country. It is open to both individual and fraternity membership, and members may have multiple entries – the more the merrier, as they say. It would be good if all fraternities considered taking at least one subscription. One fraternity has six subscriptions. Each entry costs £12. The subscription becomes due on the 1st January each year. The number and value of the prizes will depend on the number of members.

For the 2016 draw we are accepting entries through to the end of May 2016. We aim to hold two draws in 2016, most likely in early summer and in the autumn.

Prize structure: As the number of entries builds up again to their former levels we will review the prize structure, and probably introduce at least one prize of £100 or over. The Stratford (London) parish 300 Club, for example, has a top prize of £500.

Suggestions and Queries: Please contact Michael Martin (mamartin@live.co.uk) or Roger Yelland



(rogerofs@gmail.com) with any queries or questions, and any ideas you may have for developing the 100 Club. Perhaps you have experience of other 100 Clubs. They are quite common among clubs and societies.

Subscriptions: Cheques made payable to 'Secular Franciscan Order 100 Club' for subscriptions to the 100 Club should be sent to the National Treasurer Michael Martin at: 25 Cleavelands, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 2EQ.

If you wish to pay by bank transfer please pay to:

Secular Franciscan Order 100 Club

Sortcode: 40-21-17 Account No. 51453858

The Bank is HSBC. Please ensure you include a reference on the bank transfer authorisation that clearly identifies who you are! And to be sure send Michael a note or an email (mamartin@live.co.uk).

FRATERNITIES SHARING

ERITH

We had such a lovely meeting in January. It was so happy and it should always be a happy occasion when we meet as our brothers and sisters anywhere and at anytime.

We have two Enquirers and both are called Joyce. They are lovely ladies. Robert will be taking his final part of his candidacy in February and Paula will be attending.

Dear Fr Prins had an accident – he had tripped and broke a bone in his foot so he has to take things easy for a while and may not be able to attend our February fraternity. We are keeping him in prayer and ask all our region to do so too. Thank you. We are hopeful Fr Martin will give us a talk but no news yet.

God Bless you from the Erith family of the OFS .

Hilda – Fraternity Minister



CROYDON



We have 13 professed brothers and sisters and one Enquirer – Joseph Uwagba, who will come to Candidacy at our next fraternity in April. As our usual fraternity date falls on Easter Sunday this year we will not be gathering but continue to hold each other in prayer as we do for our whole region and Order. At long last the work on the two halls at our Seat, St Mary's Croydon, started 3 weeks ago. However, it has meant we have had to find an alternative meeting place and Fr Paddy of St Dominic's in Waddon kindly permitted the use of their Narthex. Already it looks like delays to the refurbishment of the halls at St Mary's so it may be we cannot get back to our Seat for

another couple of months – we wait hopefully and patiently.

We ended 2015 with another fraternity social and it was a great success with 5 families, 12 children and fraternity members. All joined in the games such as pass the parcel, musical statues, Simon says etc etc. It was so lovely to see so much enjoyment on all our faces – age, aches and pains did not get a look-in for those few hours (but some of us paid for it the next day haha). You can be sure there was cheating going on by children as well as adults which was all in good fun!!

As a result of our Elections last year our council is Declan Walsh – Minister; Sarah Driver - Vice Minister; Kathy Maskens – Secretary; Salvina Bartholomeusz - Treasurer. We have met as council 3 times already with a fourth in a month or so to finalise things for our Day of Reflection on 26 June. Like all DORs they are spiritual, searching, bonding and fun! You, your families and friends are all welcome to join us at The Emmaus Centre, in West Wickham. The photo above is the Emmaus Centre and is set in lovely and peaceful grounds. It is run by the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. One of the OFM Conv friars from Waterloo will lead us this year. The cost is £25 per person for the day and includes morning and afternoon tea/coffee etc and a lovely cooked lunch. It would be lovely to share such days as these with each other.

Declan Walsh – Fraternity Minister

A Teaser– 10 10 10 = 9:50 Add a line eg /, —, or | to something in the statement in pink to make it true



South East Regional Fraternities:

ASHFORD
Last Tuesday

St Pio of Pietrelcina
7.00pm – 9.00pm
The Priests House, St Teresa of Avila, Maidstone Road, TN24 8TX

CROYDON
4th Sunday

St Mary of the Angels
2.30pm – 4.30pm
St Mary's Church, Small Hall, 70 Wellesley Rd, Croydon, Surrey CR0 2AR

ERITH
3rd Sunday

Our Lady of the Angels
2.45pm – 4.45pm
The Angelus Centre, Carlton Road, Erith, Kent DA8 1DN

HOLLINGTON
1st Sunday

St Clare
3.30pm – 5.30pm
Poor Clares, 22 Upper Church Road, Hollington, TN37 7AS

For more information please contact:

Regional Minister:	01372 812 923
Regional Vice Minister:	07789 41 42 53
Regional Secretary:	01303 813 095
Regional Treasurer:	020 8300 1760

National Minister	paulapofs@gmail.com
National Secretary	pamsvt@aol.com

Franciscan website links:

Secular Franciscan Order GB
Secular Franciscan International Order
Franciscans International

<http://www.ofs.gb.org/>
<http://www.ciofs.org/portal/>
<http://www.franciscansinternational.org/>

ST AUGUSTINE of HIPPO (354 - 430 AD; Feast Day: 28 August)



Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy.
Guard me, O Holy Spirit, that I myself may always be holy.

The following confessional prayer of St. Augustine, is also very much in the spirit of Lent.

*O Lord, the house of my soul is narrow;
enlarge it that you may enter in.
It is ruinous, O repair it!
It displeases your sight.
I confess it, I know.
But who shall cleanse it,
to whom shall I cry but to you?*

*Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord,
and spare your servant from strange sins.*

