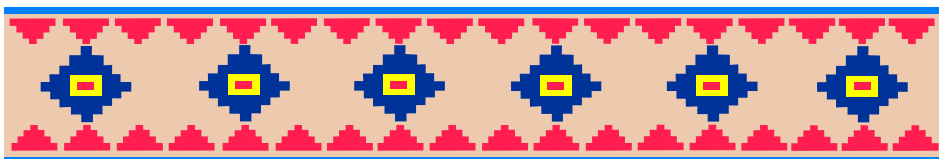
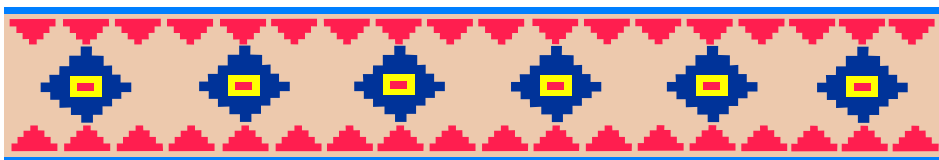




# East Anglian Region Newsletter Spring 2016

Regional Fraternity Patrons: St. Jude the Apostle + St. Rita of Casia



**May 2016**

Dear Secular Franciscan Sisters and Brothers,

I hope you will find the contents of the Spring Newsletter interesting and inspiring. I have very little contents sent to me for inclusion, so I do my best to include things I come across, such as the Shakespeare quote below and the inclusion of the thoughts of our own St. Angela of Foligno. I think you will find Father Patrick's suggestions worth discussing with your fraternities.

PLEASE SEND ME CONTENT FOR THE NEXT Newsletter.  
REPORTS FROM FRATERNITIES OR SPIRITUAL BITS  
AND PIECES TO SHARE WITH OTHERS.



In this Year of Mercy, Shakespeare helpeth us:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That, in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy [— *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 4,  
Scene 1]

#### Report from Fraternities:

CAMBRIDGE 'OUR LADY OF THE POOR' FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR  
FRANCISCAN ORDER – MINUTES OF THE MEETING AT OLEM ON SATURDAY 9  
JANUARY 2016

Some members of the travelling community came to see Sr. Rosalie, so after she had prayed with them, and we had offered them tea and biscuits, they left and our fraternity meeting began. Present at the meeting were Jaci, Daphne, Sr. Rosalie, Trudie, Chris and visitor Nick. Apologies for not being able to come were received from Peter, Trish, and Michael Mortimer. While Sr. Rosalie prayed with the people who had come to see her we quietly sang 'Make me a channel of your peace', and 'Ave Maria, gratia plena', and said the Angelus. The meeting proper began at 12.00 with Opening Prayer from the Handbook and the Saturday Office of Our Lady. We prayed for the sick, for the souls of the dying, and remembered those who had asked for our prayers, and also said a Hail Mary for the Pope's intentions. We then said the

Franciscan Consecration to the Sacred Heart.

Jaci our minister commented on the significance of the year ahead, with our fraternity elections due to be held in December, also that it is the special Holy Year of Mercy in the Church, with a jubilee indulgence available. The shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham has been designated a 'minor basilica', and we plan to have our fraternity pilgrimage to Walsingham in May. Jaci proposed that at each of the fraternity meetings in the year ahead we spend some time studying and reflecting on Pope Francis' encyclical letter 'Laudato Si', on care for the environment, our 'common home'. Nick had expressed an interest in prayers to St. Joseph, and it was agreed that 'A Prayer of Petition in Honour of St. Joseph', on page 199 of the Handbook, would be our fraternity daily 'prayer of the month'.

From a St. Philip Howard church newsletter Jaci read about the Epiphany, a word which means to show or reveal, to make known. The Epiphany is also known as the feast of the Three Kings, and this has been celebrated on various dates in different Christian traditions, in some places with the exchange of presents. The three kings were the first gentiles to acknowledge Jesus as King, and their mission when they left Bethlehem was to take this revelation of a new King to the world. There is a tradition that one of the kings was initially sceptical and unbelieving but received faith on seeing the baby Jesus. The act of worship by the kings indicates that Jesus came for people of all races, for the whole world. Certainly it was revealed to Simeon that Jesus would be the "salvation which you have prepared for all nations, the light to enlighten the Gentiles" (Nunc Dimittis). There was some discussion about people who have no faith in Jesus, who are outside the Catholic or other Christian churches. Daphne said that the best way to find faith is by coming to Jesus, and that the Christmas story is of central importance to people looking for and finding Jesus today.

Jaci reported that the Norwich fraternity were now addressing each other as Brother or Sister, as had been the custom some years ago. There was

discussion about this and Sr. Rosalie commented on how the tradition in the Franciscan Third Order of wearing the habit and being called Brother or Sister had ended. Daphne said that this tradition had ended when the new Rule came out, and she was not in favour of a return to it.

We then had our Epiphany party with a shared lunch and, after prayer to the Holy Spirit, the distribution of an admonition of St. Francis, the name of a saint, a proverb, a saying and a present to each person. Jaci said that St. Francis had left 28 admonitions, which in the medieval world were more than a warning, to be the strict, practical application to life of a Biblical passage.

The secret bag [common fund] collection was £44 which with cash in hand made a sum of £188.66. Capitation of £168 and hall rental for 2015 had already been paid, so after £10 travel expenses for Trudie and £15 January hall rental were deducted, leaving £163.66, £160 was reserved for 2016 capitation, leaving a new cash in hand sum of £3.66. The meeting ended with Closing Prayer from the Handbook.

### Bedford, Gospel to Life Fraternity

We have had a busy month of May and one of the highlights was the beautiful evening we had at the convent of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit, to which we had been invited by the Associates of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit. There were six OFS. We joined two Sisters whose home we were in and about 8 of the Associates plus four or five of the Seculars of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The meeting was in three parts: We all introduced ourselves and then we spent about an hour in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. Then we returned to the sitting room where we were given a brief history of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit and later how the Associates came about and how they all work together. The evening ended with teas and cakes etc, It was very prayerful and interesting as well.

Norwich Fraternity: On 19<sup>th</sup> May Michael Mortimer, Anne & Michael Simmonds left Bedford at about 06:30 for 07:30 Morning Prayer at Our Lady & The English Martyrs Church, Cambridge, followed by 08:00 Mass. We then continued to Rob & Clare Hardie's home at Hainford, Norwich, to join their fraternity for a beautiful day. Sammy Tassili was received, in the beautiful sunny garden by Rob and fraternity in the presence of Debbie Bool, Regional Minister, who was there with her little 4 year-old grandson, George. Marshall Hopkins led the singing.



Sammy Tassili and Rob Hardie,  
Minister, after the Reception.

After an excellent shared lunch, we watched the very interesting and informative San Damiano Crucifix Powerpoint presentation given by Sister Francisca, Poor Clare, at Arkley, a year or more ago, who kindly gave a copy to Michael Simmonds, who presented it.



Thanks to Rob Hardie who took this photo, and to his wife, Clare, who cared for us with devotion, providing chairs, tea, coffee and eats! Thanks to host & hostess!

On 7<sup>th</sup> May three of us drove to Norwich for a Regional Day of Reflecton led by Father Patrick Lonsdale OFM. We were welcomed by the Regional Minister Debbie Bool and others of the Norwich Fraternity. Other OFS members came from Cambridge and Ipswich Fraternities and I think we were fifteen in total. After our welcome and coffee or tea etc we had a talk from Father Patrick based on the Pope's letter Laudato Si and Father particularly focused on the topics of Youth Unemployment and the loneliness of the elderly and housebound. We had a good discussion on these subjects. At 12 we had a beautiful Mass in the church followed by a bring and share Lunch which was good. Then in the afternoon we were challenged to meet weekly and do some study of Scripture at every meeting. We did a study of the Gospel for Sunday which was good. We will discuss whether to have more frequent meetings at our next Community meeting.

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July, our brother, Michael Mortimer, will celebrate 60 years as a professed Secular Franciscan!



28<sup>th</sup> April: Blessed Luchesius, Third Order [from the Franciscan Breviary Supplement]

***Luchesius was a successful businessman in Northern Italy until he met St. Francis. After hearing the saint, he gave his goods to the poor and was the first to join the Third Order [now The Secular Franciscan Order]. He lived a holy life and died in 1260 when he was about 80 years old.***

*OFFICE OF READINGS: second reading, from the spiritual writings of Saint Angela of Foligno*

Through poverty the first man fell, and through poverty the second man,

Jesus Christ, God and Man, lifted us up again. The worst poverty is ignorance, Adam fell through ignorance and all falls are due to ignorance. Hence the need for God's children to be lifted up by a contrary poverty.

The example of such poverty is found in God himself and the man Jesus Christ. The God-man Jesus Christ raised us up and redeemed us through poverty. Indeed, it was an exquisite poverty to conceal completely his power and his nobility. He abandoned himself to blasphemy, insult, execration[*cursing*], capture, imprisonment, scourging and crucifixion; he stands there, always utterly powerless. This poverty is a model for our life. We need to follow this example of poverty; not that we have any power to hide; rather, what we need above all is to display and understand our utter powerlessness.

The glorious Virgin Mother of God exemplifies this poverty also, very clearly. In the presence of the great mystery her answer reveals her as one of our fallen race, adopting the vocabulary of slavery: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord*, the lowliest of titles. That is a poverty pleasing to God.

What a perfect example we possess in our Blessed Father Francis. Poverty lit up his whole life. Its light flooded and overflowed his whole being to create and reveal to us a life that was unique. I cannot look to any other saints who so particularly opened up for me the book of life, a model of the life of the God-Man Jesus Christ. Nor do I see anyone who in so detailed a way, has conformed himself to Christ. So perfectly was his gaze set there that he could not take the eyes of his soul off him; this is evident even in his very flesh. Because he was so fully and firmly fixed there he was filled to overflowing with the most sublime wisdom; and with that wisdom he filled the world, and fills it still. [*I think this should be read again and again – it is so rich!* [editor]





**CHRISTIAN LOVE:** On the fifth Sunday of Easter, one of our priests, Father Roy, gave a homily on Christian Love. He explained that, in the old Law, we had to love as we love ourselves, but in the new Law we have to love **as Jesus loves us**. Inspired by this homily, I offer the following:

Quoting the Law of Moses known to his listeners, “Jesus said, You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the prophets also.” [Matt 22: 37-40]. But during the Last Supper, Jesus took his disciples to a higher level of love. He said, “I give you a **New** Commandment: Love one another; **just as I have loved you**, you also must love one another.” [John 13: 34]

Our love is imperfect but Jesus’ love is perfect. As his disciples, or followers, we have to follow the perfect model. Love in the OT Law was based on SELF; Love in the NT Law is based on Jesus’ love for us. His love was so great that he endured his whole Passion for love of us sinners, including his Agony in the Garden [knowing what sufferings he was to endure for love of us and knowing that many people would not WANT to be saved?]; his arrest and insulting and brutal condemnation, which he accepted in humility [against our pride?]; his barbaric Scourging [for our sins of the flesh?]; his torturous Crowning with Thorns [for our sinful thoughts?]; his unbearable carrying of the Cross [for our sins of journeying into temptation?]; his being excruciatingly nailed to the Cross [for the sins committed with our hands?] and the most terrible agony of cramps and excruciating pain all over his body [for our sins of causing pain and suffering to others?]

Jesus loved us to death. He **commands** us to love one another **in the same way**. Our martyrs have lived out this command. We should try to foster such love for our neighbour, and our neighbour is everyone! [MS 3/5/16]



## Father Patrick Lonsdale OFM at Norwich – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Father began his talk by telling us that he had been attending a meeting at which *Laudato Si* of Pope Francis was discussed. He gave us a hand-out which quotes articles 13-15 of our Rule [read]. He added a quote from Pope Francis: “The most serious of the evils that afflict the world these days are youth unemployment and the loneliness of the old. The old need care and companionship; the young need work and hope but have neither one nor the other and the problem is they don’t even look for them anymore.” [I think this was written before the present mass migration crisis. ed.]

And then from Saint Pope John Paul II: Christians “realise that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith.”

He then took us through the themes of:

- Youth unemployment,
- The loneliness of the elderly and how we can help to alleviate this in our local community, by visiting and helping lonely people
- Climate change and how we can do our bit in reducing our carbon footprint by not being wasteful with water, paper, food etc.
- He pointed out that these things are local issues, so we should get involved.

Father gave us another hand-out, from the Catholic Social Teaching Series – Reading the Signs of the Times [downloadable from internet] The main conclusions of this document are:

### **1. SEE**

- **Seeing, hearing and experiencing** the lived reality of individuals and communities.
- **Naming** what is happening that causes you concern

- Carefully and intentionally **examining** the primary data of the situation. What are the people in this situation doing, feeling and saying? What is happening to them and how do you/they respond?

## 2. **JUDGE**

The word ‘judge’ is used here in a positive sense – to **analyse** the situation and **make an informed judgement** about it. This involves two key parts:

[a] social analysis and [b] theological reflection

## 3. **ACT**

**Planning and carrying out** actions aimed at transforming the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice.

[Further resources to assist in seeing, judging and acting are available from the **Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.**] See, **Judge and Act** process.

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After a shared lunch Father led us again. Although we **Seculars** are different from those in the **Religious** life, there are some similarities. In the religious life there is community and there is fraternity. These things mean something different to seculars. Our fraternity means brothers and sisters. Article 13 of our Rule emphasises this. Article 14 emphasises that we have to make the world more fraternal and evangelical.

Father then had some **suggestions** to make. He stressed that they are only suggestions, not a directive!

Within our fraternities we might decide to meet **more frequently**, with a structure and time-limit. [as they do in the First Order] This might consist of  
 [a] **Check-in**. How are you? What’s happened during the week? [10 minutes]  
 [b] **Lectio Divina** – Gospel-based community. [20 to 30 minutes] [c] **We have a mission** [gospel to life] [ 20 to 30 minutes] [d] Refreshments if desired

## Description of *lectio* in a group

- Opening Prayer
- Instruction about *lectio divina* [optional]
- Announcement of the Scriptural passage
- Slow reading of the passage aloud
- Silence
- People may mention a particular word or two that struck them in the reading, without further comment
- Second reading of the passage aloud
- Silence
- People may say a couple of sentences about their responses to the passage
- During the remainder of the time of *lectio*, each person passes through the movements as the Spirit calls him or her. At the end of the appointed time, the facilitator gently calls the group back together
- Closing prayer
- *Collatio [sharing]* and fellowship

Being a penitent is to be a person of change. SEE – JUDGE – ACT

The day was a great experience – like a mini-retreat, which is, of course, what we expect from our days of recollection.



Please send your contributions to me:

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or to

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Thank you!