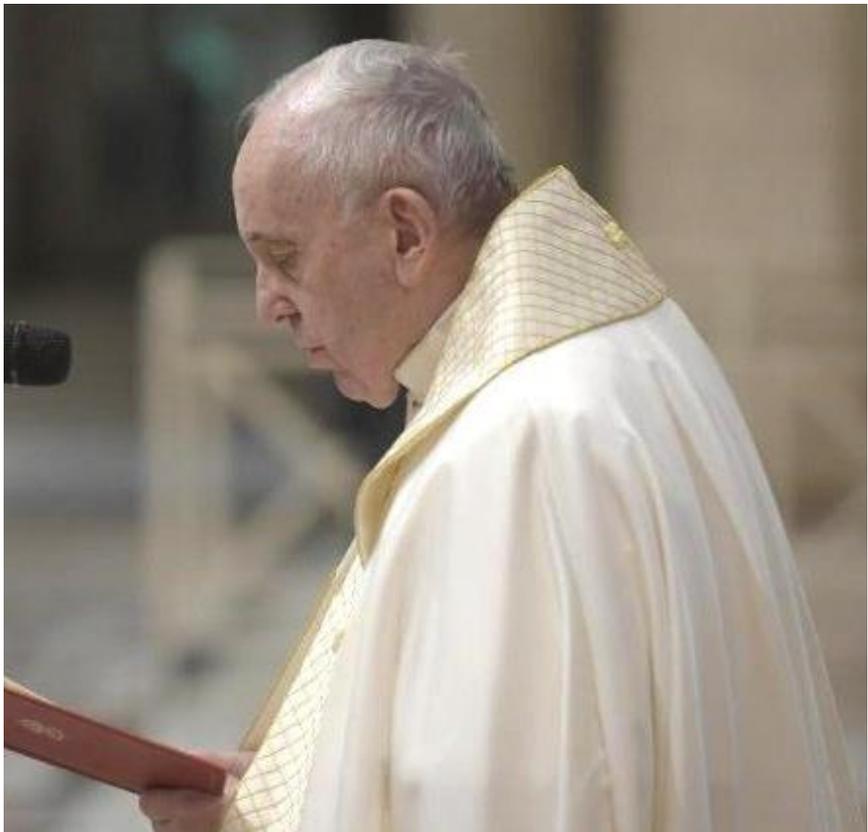


**SECULAR
FRANCISCAN ORDER
+ EAST ANGLIAN
REGION**



**SPRING
2020
ISSUE 11* part 1**



**Pope Francis giving his homily at St. Peter's before his Urbi et
Orbi Blessing on Italy and the world on 27th March 2020
during the Corona Virus plague**

March 2020

EAR Regional Magazine Issue 11 [part 1]]

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Franciscan family of East Anglia. As we are mostly confined to our homes for the duration of the Corona Virus plague, I have made an executive decision not to be beaten by the plague but to work with it.

Therefore, I am sending out our EAR Regional Magazine in collectable parts. This is part 1. Please read it and store it so that it can be joined later by the second part.

This will give you a little Franciscan reading to supplement whatever else you are doing and remember our little Handbooks – they are a wealth of little Franciscan treasures. You might even find time to read it right through from cover-to-cover. Also, very seasonal, are the Stations of the Cross starting on page 134, written by Father Paschal Burlinson OFM Cap.

East Anglian Region Day of Recollection and Elective Chapter at St. Mary's Church and Hall, Ipswich on Saturday 7th March 2020

[Approx. 11.00] After welcomes –don't shake hands – [Corona virus], we settled down to listen to Father Dónal Walsh OFM, our Spiritual Assistant. Brief notes of his talk now follow:

We have to change in our lives, most obviously in Lent and living a Franciscan vocation/charism. We have to be prepared to live a life of conversion.

For the first time, last November, English and Spanish Franciscans of the First Order, had a meeting in Rome, at the Conventual International College. Father Jesmond OFM Conv. was sadly unable to attend.

We three Spiritual Assistants try to work together [OFM, OFM Capuchin and OFM Conventual] to support one another as friars and pass this on to fraternities and regions.

The main reason for that international meeting in Rome of about 73 friars was because we can get very insular from the international spiritual Franciscan family. There was a lot of input and the friars left with suitcases heavier with paper!

There were brothers and sisters of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Orders, Third Order Regular [TOR] and three International Spiritual Assistants and they worked night and day, There were representatives from South America [TOR], Friar Minor from South Africa, Capuchin from Tanzania, Conventual from India and Youfra: a lady and International Minister.

*There were some wonderful speakers - a time of them supporting us. We were listening to areas of the world where Youfra is growing. Don't be despondent – at the moment our future is unknown. In the past we had many tertiaries and lots of Franciscans and Franciscan life. We don't have too many vocations over here so it's hard making commitments. But the Holy Spirit is with us, leading us. The Monthly meetings for Secular Franciscans are vital. Pray and share together and encourage each other. Even as friars we have to make a daily commitment to our life as baptised followers in the Franciscan charism [fraternity.] If the times are not as strong in our commitment as they should be, today is for us to change and re-animate – this is central to our Franciscan life. It is vital in the season of Lent. We have changes in our ways of living and also in our spiritual life. We attend Mass and pray, but not always fully into it. **Our Daily Mass should be like our First Holy Communion Day. Today I have Holy Communion as if for the first time ever.** Enthusiasm in the Mass should still be alive in me and all of us.*

There are not so many young people, family members, practising, but WE are continuing. We have two new Professions today. New commitments are being made. We pray and hope to encourage more to think about this way of life. How do we promote? Friars Minor give cards – WE are the promoters. It's a challenge. Some can't go the whole way as we Friars Minor can. The Holy Spirit guides people in their discernment. One has doubts – marriage? Be a

parent? Go with that and God bless you. To be a good husband and father – we encourage folk along their way. All here animate ME.

Sickness concerns people: they still turn up for our faith commitment. We must be animated. Many young people are interested in the Franciscan life. Vocations for Friars Minor - young people love talking to the likes of you. They are fascinated to know of the commitment people make. DON'T BE AFRAID! Young people may be interested in Franciscan life. [Little cards] Don't be shy. The Lord has called us to do this. But we need to be animated in order to animate others.

Some friars have been spat upon in the street. There is persecution in the world – religious bigotry – people persecuted for their faith. Every one of us needs the healing touch of Our Lord. Franciscans should be attuned to people. Fraternal gatherings are an ideal time to be affirmed. The ofs in Stratford is very committed to the poor. 54 meals are given at the door, quietly. A lot of Secular Franciscans are heavily involved in parish and the outside community; sandwiches, foodbank etc. I pray and get involved, a quiet witness. As for Youfra, safeguarding is essential. DBS . On commitment, there are many of our youth with TAU crosses. How to get Youfra off the ground? The youth can run themselves. Adults need to be a guide from behind.

1200: Mass, incorporating the Rite of Profession for Annette Hunt[Cambridge fraternity] and Peter Carr, [Ipswich fraternity] - See attached photo. After Mass and the two Professions, we had a bring and share lunch

2 pm: Elective Chapter presided over by Betsy Hart ofs, National Minister and witnessed by Father Dónal Walsh OFM on behalf of the First Order. Before the regional elections, the out-going officers said a few words:

DEBBIE BOOL – outgoing Regional Minister:

I found it a very interesting time as regional minister. I am grateful especially to David Gleave for his support. I visited all the fraternities in our region, but now family commitments have taken over. But I had a really enjoyable time in office.

CHRIS HOUSDEN. – outgoing Regional Vice-Minister. *I have done three years as vice-minister. The best part was being at meetings, beginning with Mass, an opportunity for Confession and a shared lunch. I have been learning more about Francis, have deputised once for Debbie and enjoyed preparing for the Beatitudes Chapter, but regrettably could not attend as I was unwell at the time.*

DAVID GLEAVE,- outgoing Regional Secretary,*[is always very busy and involved.] I have emailed all fraternities with information and updates that were necessary, prepared for Regional Day of Recollection etc., Updated Regional Admissions, receptions etc. I greatly enjoyed my tenure of office which has contributed greatly to my Franciscan formation. [David is always an encyclopaedia of anything Secular Franciscan and always ready to help!]*

EDWIN EDWARDS – outgoing Regional Treasurer. *I have served for three years and introduced double entry system, on-line banking. I am prepared to serve another term.*

JACI AGARWALA – outgoing Regional Formator. *Formation is a great responsibility. I have grown in friendship, have had meetings with formators in the region on initial and ongoing formation.*

CHRIS WHITTAM – outgoing Justice & Peace and Integrity of Creation Minister. *I had no precise job description but it is to do with a Franciscan presence in the world.*

BETSY HART our National Minister:

With a model of a border collie on the table, Betsy reminded us that Christ is our Shepherd and we are his sheepdogs and the sheep are the people we are entrusted to look after. The sheepdogs are Regional and local Ministers and ALL ministers and we care for the sheep on behalf of the Shepherd.

Listen and discern-allow yourself to be used by God for his purposes. We have been moved by two professions today. Profession is a BIG COMMITMENT. What would happen if I refused Profession?

Then followed the Regional Elections in the presence of Father Dónal Walsh OFM. The results were as follows:

<i>MINISTER</i>	<i>Sr. BRIGID RAWLINSON</i>	<i>[Norwich Fraternity]</i>
<i>VICE- MINISTER</i>	<i>Br. CHRIS WHITTAM</i>	<i>[Cambridge Fraternity]</i>
<i>SECRETARY</i>	<i>Br. ROB HARDIE</i>	<i>[Norwich Fraternity]</i>
<i>TREASURER</i>	<i>Br. EDWIN EDWARDS</i>	<i>[Ipswich Fraternity]</i>
<i>FORMATION</i>	<i>Br. DAVID GLEAVE</i>	<i>[Ipswich Fraternity]</i>
<i>JPIC</i>	<i>Br. CHRIS HOUSDEN</i>	<i>[Ipswich Fraternity]</i>

Let us thank God for the generosity of heart displayed by those who accepted the responsibility of being sheepdogs to care for us sheep!

The following was sent to me by our brand new Regional Secretary, Bro. Rob Hardie just days after the Elective Chapter at Ipswich. It is a good supplement to my notes on Fr. Donal's talk, as he has included things I omitted. Hurrah for our Regional Secretary!

**EAST ANGLIA REGIONAL ELECTIVE CHAPTER, DAY OF RECOLLECTION AND RITE
OF PROFESSION FOR TWO NEW MEMBERS.**

Saturday 7 March 2020

Our regional chapter was held in St Mary's Church Hall, Woodbridge Rd., Ipswich and we were delighted to welcome our national minister Betsy Hart and Fr Donal Walsh OFM, one of our three national spiritual assistants. It was also great to see and welcome Paula Pearce, our last national minister and also John Power our last national formator who is responsible for all our present beautifully presented formation material.

Fr Dónal talked in the morning about the importance of a really committed life of conversion, both for secular Franciscans and also for the other

Franciscan orders. As our Rule reminds us it is so important to make a *daily* act of conversion due to our human frailty (para 7).

We have to live out our lives in the *present moment*. Today is always *the* day to start again, to re-convert and be a better Franciscan. He said it's like imagining we are receiving communion for the first time.

Fr Donal then talked of the importance of *animation!* We need to *be* animated and to then animate others. St Francis used to give the advice that no brother should speak or preach on a subject unless he had been thoroughly inspired beforehand. Fr Donal said that our actions should be active and alive both in the parish and in the outside community, always seeking ways to *get involved*.

Holy Mass followed at midday with the Rite of Profession of both Annette Hunt into the Cambridge 'Our Lady of the Poor' Fraternity and Peter Carr into the Ipswich 'Blessed John Duns Scotus' Fraternity.

The music accompaniment was just excellent and was provided by the St Mary's Music Group who welcomed aboard Brother Sammy and his trumpet.

The regional elections were conducted by Betsy and Paula with Fr Donal in attendance.

(from the Handbook concluding elections)

Most generous Father grant to all of us to know you better, and make you known to all. Through the dedicated efforts of our new leaders who have been called to serve our Regional Fraternity, may we live more vigorously the Gospel way of life that You inspired through Francis of Assisi. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Many thanks to all those who provided food and refreshments throughout the day. Rob Hardie ofs (Regional Secretary)



Peter Carr + Annette Hunt



Sr. Annette Hunt ofs and Bro. Peter Carr ofs, cutting their Profession celebration cake at our lunch break.

Many thanks, Brother Rob and whoever provided the excellent photos

Pope at Urbi et orbi: Full text of his meditation [27.03.2020]



Pope Francis meditated on the calming of the storm from the Gospel of Mark during the prayer service over which he presided on the steps of St Peter's Basilica on Friday evening. Here is the full text.

“When evening had come” (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it

has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying "We are perishing" (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps on soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples' faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus' trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (v. 38). Do you not care: they

think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: "Do you not care about me?" It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement. The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our pre-packaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly "save" us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity. In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters. "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more

than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!"

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!", "Return to me with all your heart" (Joel 2:12). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor

on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith"? Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to

us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. Is 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and

to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope. “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith”? Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter’s rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God’s blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: “Do not be afraid” (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, “cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us” (cf. 1 Pet 5:7).

{ Courtesy Vatican News }

Now I appeal to all our readers to send me your fraternity reports, photos of fraternity activities [before the plague hit!], articles of interest, book reviews and how you are coping at home during this time of the Corona Virus plague.

You can email direct to me: michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com

Or send me your article by ordinary post, if it's still running, or even phone me with your news or views. We have had some great articles over the last editions. Please keep them coming. The magazine relies on your submissions.

Michael Simmonds ofs, 4 East Court, Goldington Green, Bedford MK41 0AH.

Tel.: 01234 308395

**May the Lord bless you and keep you
May He show His face to you
and be merciful to you.
May He turn His countenance to you
and give you peace.
May the Lord bless you.**

**For part two of the magazine, please send me your reports:
All Ministers [especially those recently elected], and there is also a
great opportunity for ALL readers.
My wife and I have been connected to EWTN today and a friar, Fr. Leo
Clifford OFM challenged us with this question:
If you could give just one sermon/homily in your life, what would it
be? Well, what would *you* say? Please send me your homily!**

**SECULAR
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**SPRING
2020
ISSUE 11* part 2**

This beautiful prayer was written by an Italian priest who was self-isolating and very sadly lost his own brother a few days before to Covid-19...

I'm staying at home, Lord! And today, I realise, you taught me this, remaining obedient to the Father, for thirty years in the house of Nazareth, waiting for the great mission.

I stay at home, Lord, and in Joseph's studio, your keeper and mine, I learn to work, to obey, to round the corners of my life and prepare you a work of art.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And I know that I am not alone because Mary, like any mother, is in the next room, doing chores and preparing lunch for all of us, God's family.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And I do it responsibly for my own good, for the health of my city, for my loved ones, and for the good of my brother, whom you have put beside me, asking me to take care of him in the garden of life.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And in the silence of Nazareth, I pledge to pray, to read, study, meditate, be useful for small jobs, in order to make our home more beautiful and more welcoming.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And in the morning, I thank you for the new day you give me, trying not to spoil it and welcome it with wonder, as a gift and an Easter surprise.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And at noon I will receive the greeting of the angel, I will make myself useful for love, in communion with you who have made your flesh to live among us: and, tired of the journey, thirsty, I will meet you at Jacob's well, and thirsty for love on the Cross.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And if the evening makes me melancholy, I will invoke you like the disciples of Emmaus: stay with us, the evening has arrived and the sun sets.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And in the night, in communion of prayer with the many sick, the lonely and all the caregivers, I will wait for the dawn to sing your mercy again and tell everyone that, in the storms, you have been my refuge.

I'm staying at home, Lord! And I don't feel alone and abandoned, because you told me: I'm with you every day, yes, and especially in these days of confusion, O Lord, in which, if my presence is not necessary, I will reach everyone, only with the wings of prayer. Amen

Welcome to part 2 of our EAR Franciscan magazine. I think we have a “good read” in this issue, thanks to all of you who have contributed to it. It is *your* magazine, so I am delighted to have received such good content.

I am putting the report of our new Regional Minister, Sr. Brigid Rawlinson of Norwich Fraternity first. She generously agreed to fill the post after Debbie Bool had done her 6 years, I believe, and thank you, Debbie, for your enthusiastic service to our region.

I was wondering what to put on the front of this issue and I thought that the priest’s prayer-verses summed up our experiences of “lock-down”. My wife and I are among the “endangered species”, so we are very careful to keep our outings to a minimum and wash our hands when we get back. I usually take a Dettol wet-wipe with me, especially on my weekly trip for food- shopping, to wipe the trolley handles and my hands.

Our “Brave New World”, relying on money and science to look after us, has had to bow to our Creator, who is in overall charge of all of us. We wonder if life will ever be the same again. Let us hope that our churches will soon open their doors again. If Tesco’s and Sainsbury’s and the other supermarkets can be open for bodily food, so should our churches be open for our spiritual food, especially the Holy Eucharist and the tribunal of penance. My wife and I have been “attending” Mass mainly via EWTN, as the Mass from there is very intimate, whereas the streaming from English sources feel rather remote, in spite of the great efforts of priests involved. We are all sinners and we need nourishment for our souls, so let us ask our Lord for our churches to open again, respecting social distancing and distributing the Sacred Species in a safe way. In part 1 of this issue, I asked readers for homilies and have only received one, so I have made it two myself. I apologise for any mistakes I may have made in this issue, or any omissions! Fraternally, Bro. Michael of

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Second Sunday of Easter

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Alleluia, He is risen, He is risen indeed!

Six weeks ago, on Saturday 7th March at the Regional Day of Recollection I was elected as your Regional Minister. What an honour and a privilege as well as being slightly scary! Before attending the meeting and in prayer I made a pact with the Holy Spirit that if I were nominated, I would say “Yes”. Thank you, Br Michael, for the nomination and for being led by the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Little did I know, that in a few short weeks, life as we know it would be changed so dramatically. It is hard to believe that the WHOLE WORLD is affected by this invisible virus.

The virus is impacting on individuals, families, and groups like nothing else in living memory. The bottom line is how do we cope and how do we come to terms with what is happening in our world.

I have found that today’s Reading from the first letter of St Peter (1:3-9) has had a powerful impact on me. I was struck by the following: ***Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls***”.

The part that stays with me is “...*you are receiving the outcome of your faith...*”

How I feel and how I am coping with the virus is all down to my faith... I feel calm, I feel that God is in control; I don’t have to wake Him up in the boat because there is a storm, all I need to do is to ask Him to be with me at this time, to keep my family and friends safe, all I need is Faith!

I pray that you, my Sisters and Brothers will remain safe and well and that we all come out of this experience having deepened our Faith and drawn ever closer to the Lord our God.

I will now take the opportunity to introduce myself to those of you who do not “know” me. My name is Brigid Rawlinson (nee Hughes). I was born in County Derry, Northern Ireland not that many years ago!!! I was born into a family with devout Catholic parents, five brothers and two sisters. I am the oldest girl, third from the top.

Being from a family of ten I had to learn to be heard otherwise I would have got lost in the crowd; I had no intention of letting that happen! We lived a mile from our local Church and from the local Primary School (St Brigid’s). I walked to both, unaccompanied, and from a young age. In the school Summer holidays, I walked to Mass every day on my own and without prompting. My parents were intrigued and slightly bemused.

From Primary School, I managed to get myself into the popular Catholic Grammar School run by Holy Family Sisters. My parents had to pay school fees for the first year as I had failed my 11+. I missed a whole page of questions as my eyesight was not great and no one had noticed! I have no idea how they found the money for that first year, but I will be eternally grateful to them for the sacrifices they made for me. I passed the Review Exam at the end of the first year and my fees were then paid for the rest of my time at school.

When I was 16 years old, I was travelling home from school on the bus and I distinctly remember a voice in my head saying, “you will become a nurse and you will work in Africa”(the Holy Spirit has been ever present in my life and I have many examples of His intercession).

I went from Grammar school to the Mater Infirmorum Hospital, Belfast, to train as a nurse aged seventeen and a half, I thought I was so grown up! The Hospital was run by... you guessed it, nuns... Sisters of Mercy. I spent three years of my life there and at such a young age not only had to deal with the realities of illness and death on the wards but also shootings and bombings outside the Hospital walls. My grounding in the Catholic faith given to me by my parents helped me to deal with life in a war zone! I prayed before I went on duty and I thanked God when I came off duty.

From there I trained as a midwife in Altnagelvin Hospital, in the city of Derry, in preparation for going overseas.

I joined the Volunteer Missionary Movement, a Lay Christian Development Organisation and was allocated to work in Malawi, East Africa. I was 23 years old when I left home for Africa, I stayed two years and went back for a third year. I worked in a Mission Hospital in the bush, run by nuns, the Daughters of Wisdom. This experience has impacted on my life and is hugely influential in making me the person I am today.

When I returned from Africa, I met my husband in Northern Ireland. He was from the other side of the “religious divide” When we met it was dangerous for two people from different religious backgrounds to be together as a couple, that is why we came to live in Norfolk, it was safer for both of us.

Here we have stayed, and we have been incredibly happy, living between Norfolk and Suffolk. We will be married 30 years in September (yes, I know, I look too young...).

While bringing up our two sons I felt there was something missing in my life. I realised I was searching for a community beyond my parish community. A community where I could deepen my faith with like-minded people. The Holy Spirit drew me to the Franciscans. I made a phone call and was warmly welcomed by Rob Hardie. Rob was the perfect person to support me in the early days of my formation. He encouraged me and prayed for me, he put no pressure on me to attend meetings, supported me in putting my family first until the time came when I could commit more time to the Fraternity. It never crossed my mind, in those early days, that I would end up becoming Minister to the Fraternity and now Regional Minister. All I can do is praise God and ask for the knowledge, strength and insight required to be a servant to you all.

Pax et Bonum

Sr Brigid of S

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Report from Gospel to Life fraternity Bedford. At present along with everyone else we are not having meetings but we send out the Ministers Memo and some “Formation” for us all to study and think about each month.

We did have our usual “Epiphany Party” at Petronella’s flat in January which was lovely. We all bring food and we have a happy celebration and say Evening prayer together. We sadly lost our Brother Leon Lewis who has been a faithful member for many years with his wife Gertrude. They were married for 66 years. He had been in hospital, but he died peacefully at home on Holy Saturday. May he rest in peace.

Under normal circumstances we would try to be present as a fraternity at his funeral. As that was not possible, six of his fraternity brothers and sisters prayed the rosary for him [and his grieving widow] at the same time as his funeral was taking place at the crematorium. Our fraternity also had a Mass offered for Leon and his widow, Gertrude.

We have continued, up to lockdown, to make donations to various charities and four local SVP conferences and we have already accumulated our annual levy for next January, so we will be able to donate again once we can meet again.

Sr. Anne Theresa Simmonds of,
Gospel-to-Life fraternity
Bedford

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Cambridge ‘Our Lady of the Poor’ Fraternity

APRIL 2020 UPDATE

Following the Day of Recollection in March and Annette Hunt making her profession of the gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order, Cambridge Fraternity, we now have seven professed members. Of our two enquirers, Giusi has gone to live in the USA with her husband and daughter, and Shawn has an ongoing interfaith commitment with Essex Faith. We are happy though to have Maria, an enthusiastic YouFra member from Spain, come to our meetings as a visitor, also Nweike from Nigeria. A regular visitor from Bedford Fraternity has been Michael Mortimer, and our prayers are with him,

and his wife Teresa, at this time. Sometimes we are pleased to welcome Noelle as a visitor to the meeting.

Fraternity meetings are normally on the second Saturday of the month, after the 10.00 Mass at Our Lady and the English Martyrs Church in Cambridge, though we have met at Saint Edmund Campion Church in Wellingborough, on two Saturdays, to make it easier for members who live in Northamptonshire to attend. The problem of distance and lengthy travel between Northamptonshire and Cambridge remains, and a proposal has been to establish a video link so that members unable to come to the meeting, for health or other reasons, could take part in at least some of the meeting. But this is still a suggestion or work on hold, due now to coronavirus and the times being far from normal. Our Fraternity meetings for April and May have been cancelled, though hopefully we will again get together, safe and well, at OLEM on the second Saturday in June. The Fraternity made a pilgrimage to Walsingham, and held the monthly meeting there, on Saturday 12 October 2019, and a possible visit again this May will not now go ahead.

We have had discussion on the structure of our meetings, and agreed that the key elements of Franciscan spirituality, and formation, as well as fraternisation (very important), must be included, with lectio divina (time permitting), and that practical matters such as the secret bag collection and treasurer's report should take place at the end of the meeting. Our finances allowed us to make a donation to Aid to the Church in Need, and a donation towards OFS National Council expenses, at the beginning of this year. Our Fraternity Council elections were due in January, but because Regional Council elections took place in March at the Day of Recollection, and also our newly professed Annette is now eligible to be elected to an office in the Fraternity, we hope to have the elections in August, if our Regional Minister can attend.

But all is at present uncertain due to the Covid 19 epidemic. We must hope and pray that all will be well; that we, and our families, are all spared the

worst effects of the coronavirus. We must look to our holy and loving mother Mary, trusting in her care and protection, and giving thanks that she is our Fraternity patron: Our Lady of the Poor – pray for us!

Bro. Chris Whittam ofs, Fraternity Secretary.

Ipswich ‘Blessed John Duns Scotus’ Fraternity

We were pleased to be able to host the Regional Day of Recollection and Elective Chapter at St Mary’s Church and Hall, on Saturday 7th March. During the Mass we had the great joy of celebrating the Rite of Profession for Peter Carr, and also Annette Hunt, from the Cambridge ‘Our Lady of the Poor’ Fraternity. We were delighted that many members from across the Region; parishioners; Betsy Hart, National Minister; Paula Pearce, previous National Minister; John Power, previous National Formator; attended the Day and witness the Professions. Fr Dónal Walsh OFM, National Spiritual, asking for and playing a tambourine during the singing of ‘Laudato Sii’ will live long in the memory!! The St Mary’s Music Group who played the accompaniment to the hymns were greatly impressed!!



After the Mass we all enjoyed a shared buffet in the Parish Hall. The photo shows Annette and Peter cutting a special celebratory cake which Peter had baked. It was iced and decorated with peace doves by his daughter.

I would like to record my grateful thanks to all those Sisters and Brothers who helped in the hosting

arrangements. You worked very hard in setting up the Hall, providing teas and coffees, washing up, and clearing up – it was fraternity in action contributing greatly to the smooth running of the Day!!

The weekend after the Day of Recollection/Professions/Elective Chapter the seriousness of the Coronavirus really became apparent. Matt Hancock, Secretary Health, announced that “every person over the age of 70 will be told within the coming weeks to stay at home for an extended period to shield them from Coronavirus”. Taking into account the age profile of the Fraternity members, and that some have underlying health conditions, I emailed members suggesting we should pause our meetings. As it happened the self-isolation recommendation came into effect within days!! This was quickly followed by the introduction of social distancing. These measures inevitably led to the suspension of the public celebration of Mass.

During these challenging times, I suggested that it is important that we try to maintain a sense of fraternity, suggesting we keep in contact by email, sharing our thoughts, experiences, concerns – and prayers.

For Ongoing Formation we are using ‘Following Christ in the Footprints of Francis of Assisi’ from the National Fraternity’s website – Part 3 ‘Prayer’. The way we are using it can easily be adapted to ‘distance ongoing formation’. I email the sheets on the different topics – ‘Living a Prayer-Centred Life’; ‘The Mass’; ‘The Office said by the OFS’; ‘Meditation’; to members and copies of some of the extracts from the recommended reading, and other sources. The extracts are from, for instance, ‘Francis of Assisi: the Early Documents’; OFS Rule and General Constitutions; Scripture; ‘The Catechism of the Catholic Church’; ‘To Live as Francis Lived’; ‘Catch Me A Rainbow Too’; and from the SFO Resources Library series - ‘Called to Follow Christ’; ‘Called to Rebuild the Church’; ‘Called to live the Dynamic Power of the Gospel’. We have, therefore, been able to continue our Ongoing Formation during these challenging times when we are unable to meet!!

Thankfully copying extracts for members from the recommended reading publications is made fairly easy, because the text of many of them can be found online, including the 3 volumes of 'Francis of Assisi: the Early Documents'!!

Our Rule and General Constitutions are challenging documents!! Books, like 'Catch Me a Rainbow Too' and those in the SFO Resources Library Series written by friars Lester Bach OFM Cap, Benet Fonck OFM, and Philip Marquand OFM, all very experienced spiritual assistants, give valuable guidance on living our Rule and General Constitutions in today's world.

I recently came across the following while looking up a reference in 'Catch Me a Rainbow Too':

"A Franciscan looking for ministry has only to read Article 14 of the Rule - Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself, let them exercise their responsibilities competently in a Christian spirit of service. It pushes us into the world. It expects us to read the signs of the times. It has the audacity to believe that we can build a fraternal and evangelical (gospel) kind of world. This is the task of a lifetime for Franciscans. The starting point may be the way we function as family and fraternity. It has to do with the way married couples and single people live their Franciscan life. It begins with people who are serious about their gospel growth. In turn, they influence others. From such mustard seeds do large bushes grow. In order to fulfil this article of the Rule, fidelity will be a key. We will be faithful to the journey and alert to the vision of Francis and Clare. This vision will touch the issues that we face in everyday living".

And as Fr Lester Bach implies we are certainly being challenged by our Rule!! It is expecting great things of us!!

Our JPIC Minister, Edwin Edwards, is also emailing to us his JPIC Reports – which are always very interesting and informative. His most recent report focused on JPIC issues highlighted by the Coronavirus pandemic – those in prisons, asylum detention centres and refugee camps are more likely to succumb to the virus; lowering of income for charities; suggestions that human life is expendable in the service of the economy. Last December his report was on the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. It reproduced a useful summary of the principles under the seven headings, including ‘Life and Dignity of the Human Person’, ‘Option for the Poor and Vulnerable’, ‘The Dignity of Work and Right of Workers’ and ‘Care for God’s Creation’. In February his report focused on the Integrity of Creation.

Every year in December we like to make charitable donations, last December we made £75 donations to Aid to the Church in Need; Ipswich Families in Need (FIND) they run a foodbank; and the Ipswich SVP Conference.

“Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic, in the face of the many false securities that have now crumbled, in the face of so many hopes betrayed, in the sense of abandonment that weighs upon our hearts, Jesus says to each one of us: ‘Courage, open your heart to my love. You will feel the consolation of God who sustains you’”. Pope Francis

Let’s all follow the counsel of *Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) – Pray, Hope, and Don’t Worry!!*

David Gleave ofs, Minister

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FRATERNITY REPORT from PAX et BONUM, NORWICH

Firstly, may I introduce myself as the new Fraternity Minister by default (previously Vice Minister), Sister Brigid Rawlinson, our previous Minister, having been catapulted to the position of Regional Minister as a result of the recent elections held in Ipswich just before lockdown. My previous, and still

existing role is as the Fraternity's Formation Minister and maybe I should be thankful for lockdown as it has rather lessened the load!

At present, we have nine active members (one with transport problems so unable to get to meetings), plus one member who is currently living in Assisi, one Visitor, one undergoing Candidate formation and one who completed Enquirer's formation but now also has transport problems.

Recently we managed a successful monthly meeting via Zoom. Two members sadly did not have the technology to take part, and two struggled to get on board, but hopefully this will be rectified by the time we hold our next meeting on 3rd May. Being limited to 40 minutes we began with our prayer and Office, followed by our two minutes each of Franciscan-based sharing which had to be very strictly adhered to. After just managing to squeeze in our closing prayer, we were delighted to find Zoom had generously allowed us some extra time which was used for general social interaction. As our meeting was the Sunday before Easter there were many exchanges about which parishes were offering live services, and podcasts and websites to encourage our spirituality throughout the lockdown period. The parish where we hold our meetings, St George's Norwich, our PP, Fr Sean, holds Vespers every evening at 6pm and seems to have drawn some partakers from various parts of the world! It is a great feeling of still being part of the Parish community, particularly as he does 'shout-outs' giving us news from people he has heard from around the parish. Other formation is being carried out via email – we send out a topic for discussion and we comment by return email. We hope and pray that all our members in the East Anglia Region will keep safe and well, and God willing, we will see some much-needed change to the ways of the world, and benefits to our ecology, resulting from what we have learnt living our lives through this pandemic. Anne Murrin, ofs
24.4.20

JUSTICE AND PEACE IN CREATION REPORT

This report starts with a review of the JPIC webpage on the OFSGB website.

JPIC WEBPAGE.

Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.” (OFS Rule, Art. 19)

Firstly concerns are expressed around President Trump immigration ban targets but it is noted that it is positive that Franciscans of the USA are taking a stand on this issue in prayer for and solidarity with our refuge and immigrant brothers and sisters. (I would like to add that I am sure many were surprised that President Trump recently described the USA as a *developing* country! This came after him expressing concerns that the World Trade Organisation’s rules favoured developing countries.) For further information please see: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us

Secondly the **UK Community Sponsorship Scheme** is covered. This is a UK government-back initiative that enables community groups (including the Catholic Church) to take on a role of welcoming and supporting resettled refugees in the UK. It is hoped that Fraternities and other church groups might become involved in this project.

Also there is news of a BBC Radio 4 Westminster Hour interview with Cardinal Vincent Nichols. The Cardinal comments on leaders duty of care and expresses concern that President Trumps executive order will not help. He is concerned that Christian communities in the Middle East will face additional risks as a result. (Full interview can be heard by going onto the JPIC Web page.)

Continuing with the webpage, there is a section on our relationship with our Muslim Sisters and Brothers. We are encouraged to engage with those we

know from the Muslim faith and we are given a suggestion; talk about fasting when we are in the season of Ramadan. I have found Muslims to be very open about fasting and also the feasts that take place when fasting comes to an end. It is a good suggestion.

The **National Justice and Peace Network** also gets a mention. Their website is well worth a visit for those who have an interest in this area. justice-and-peace.org.uk

COVID 19

We are all currently in lockdown, only leaving our homes for work, essentials and exercise. Whilst this is not an easy time for any of us, for those who are refugees the situation is infinitely worse. For instance in the Calais Jungle, refugees and asylum seekers are crammed together and social distancing is impossible. An outbreak of Covid 19 would be very difficult to manage in these conditions. Also many charities have ceased operations, reducing support for a large number of refugees both abroad and in this country.

A recent BBC report from the Moria Camp, on the island of Lesbos, Greece, shows the unimaginable conditions for refugees trying to avoid Covid 19. The facility was designed for 3,000 but currently houses 18,000. How do you wash your hands regularly when water is only available at certain times in the day? The filth and squalor has to be seen to be believed. There are broken down toilets, dirty washing facilities and piles of rubbish strewn around the camp. However In the report there is a ray of light, the presence of Médecins Sans Frontières. They have set up workshops to enable men and women to make facemasks. There is a debate currently about face masks, but in this situation it feels that something positive is being achieved.

THE ENVIRONMENT

I would like to share part of a short article written by Jonathan Tulloch, who contributes regularly for the Tablet. Writing about the time of Storm Dennis,

he reflects on the climate change which is behind the storms. He asks what can we do to stop creating climate change in the light of cars multiplying, airports expanding and landfill sites swelling to bursting point?

Enter the beaver, which he describes as a flood mitigation solution with four legs, a tail and an incredible set of teeth. Known as a “keystone” species for the environmental benefits they bring, beavers build robust dams across streams. During the storms the number of dams made by recently reintroduced beavers in Devon, significantly reduced flooding. Beavers also clean our waters. Huge amounts of toxic phosphorous and nitrogen entering our water course from intensive agriculture, are trapped in the material of the dams and safely broken down. A good example of nature bringing healing to our damaged world.

I finish with part of a report prepared by Edwin Edwards, JPIC Minister, for the Ipswich Fraternity, used with his permission.

On 22 April World Earth Day marks its 50th anniversary and last November Pope Francis announced that the Catechism would be updated to define damages to the environment as ecological sins. In Pope Francis' 'Laudato Si' (On Care of our Common Home) we have a wonderful document analysing what is wrong and what needs to be done. It is affirmative and hopeful in tone and draws on a whole range of academic disciplines in its analysis and conclusions, referring to such issues as 'the globalisation of the technocratic paradigm, a decline in the quality of life, a breakdown of society and the principle of the common good'; also highlighted are how climate extremes impact poorer nations; there are suggestions for lines of approach and action with a final chapter on ecological education and spirituality. In 1910 G K Chesterton wrote his essay 'What's Wrong with the World'. It was widely read and discussed including letters to The Times. Chesterton in his inimical style added his own comment to the discussion with a letter to that newspaper—Dear Sir, I am. Yours faithfully.- the shortest ever letter to The Times. As Secular Franciscans we know the first steps for reform begin with ourselves and each one of us has to work out our own responses according to our particular circumstances and gifts. [Chris Housden ofs]

PROFESSION IN THE OFS – GIFT AND COMMITMENT

When reflecting with candidates and my fraternity on the important topic of profession, after looking at John Power's initial formation sheets, I always turn to the source for the sheets - the guidance produced by Fr Felice Cangelosi OFM Cap for the International Presidency's Formation Commission's 'Formators' Manual'. Fr Felice's guidance contains much valuable information for all of us, what follows below are selected extracts. For those who were professed many years ago this may be new material, for others I hope it will be a useful reminder.

There is a widespread opinion among many that the Profession of Secular Franciscans is a "second class" commitment, some kind of a "light" Profession. Indeed, most people have foggy ideas on the value of Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order and because of this many of us do not live the "grace" of Profession for what it really is. A true nuptial alliance with Jesus Christ aimed at a further consecration to God and at accomplishing a closer bond to the Church to reach the perfection of love and the realization of Saint Francis mission.

Popes Benedict XV, Pius XII and John Paul II constantly affirmed that the Secular Franciscan Order is a *true Order*. A Lay Order, but a Real Order. We are challenged to make this a reality as we live out our vocations in the secular state, showing commitment to our fraternal Order.

The Grace of Profession

Those who make their profession in the OFS say: "since the Lord has given me this grace, I renew my baptismal promises and consecrate myself to the service of His kingdom" (*Formula of Profession*). Dedication to the service of the kingdom comes about because the Lord gives a person the grace to consecrate himself/herself to the cause of the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit prompts us to follow the vocation of the Secular Franciscans. We are urged on by the Holy Spirit to live the Franciscan life in accordance with our own secular state. Profession comes about through God's intervention – it is a grace and a gift of the Holy Spirit. We cannot do this without recognising the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Profession: an action of the Church

Profession comes about through God's intervention. God acts through Christ whose sacred humanity is the meeting point between God and man. Christ acts through the Church. It follows that Profession is simultaneously an action of Christ and of the Church. Profession is then a solemn ecclesial act. It is also an event in time – what is known as a saving *kairós*, a moment of salvation.

Profession and Fraternity

How and in whom is the action of Christ and the Church manifested? It is the local Fraternity – the community of brothers and sisters – that makes the presence and action of the Church visible in the Profession. Profession **must** be celebrated in the presence of the local Fraternity. The reason for this is that the local Fraternity is a visible sign of the Church, which is a community of faith and love. During the Profession the Fraternity receives a gift from God – new members. Grateful for the gift, the Fraternity is united to the prayer of those making profession, so that the Holy Spirit may bring to fulfilment the work He has begun.

Profession involves the entrusting of self to the Fraternity on the part of the candidate. In profession a covenant is established with Brothers and Sisters, which can never be disregarded. Profession is not a matter of registration; one is not enrolled in the OFS. Profession is incorporation into a family which brings with it rights and obligations.

Ministries in the Celebration of Profession

The Candidates

The action of Christ and of the Church is expressed in the *person of the candidates*, who make the act of profession by promising to live the gospel life. They will have been *baptised*. Consequently, Profession is a priestly action, proper to someone who by virtue of baptism, is already incorporated into the Church, a priestly Body, and is conformed to Christ, who is priest, prophet and king. The Candidates must have been *confirmed*. Consequently, Profession is a priestly action, proper to one who, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit in *confirmation*, has been empowered to live his or her life in an attitude of priestly worship and consequently to perform the priestly act of Profession.

The Minister

The action of the Church is also made visible in the presence of the *Minister*

of the Fraternity. This is clearly stated in the Constitutions: “Profession is accepted by the minister of the local fraternity or by his or her delegate *in the name of the Church* and of the OFS. (Const 42,3).

The Ritual defines clearly the roles of the Minister of the Fraternity and of the presiding priest, when it states: “The commitment to the gospel life is received by the Minister in the name of the Church and of the fraternity. The priest presides over this rite as the witness of the Church and of the Franciscan Family”. In the celebration of the Profession the Minister of the Fraternity exercises a true and proper liturgical ministry and has the function of a “sign”: he or she makes visible and shows forth the presence and action of the Church, while the Church and the Fraternity receive the Profession through the Minister.

The Presiding Priest

The priest who presides at the celebration is defined as a “witness of the Church and of the Order”. In order to understand the kind of witness he is, we need to realise that the Profession is sacramental in nature. Consequently, the testimony of the priest is properly concerned with sacramental nature of the Rite and with sanctification. The priest’s role is to vouch for the validity of the event. The priest is the guarantor who reassures the Church regarding the suitability of the candidates.

That is why it is the priest’s job to ask questions and receive the replies, because it is through him that the Church wishes to be reassured with regard to the awareness the candidates have of the meaning of Profession, their intentions and their genuine desire to be part of the Secular Franciscan Order. And this is not all; as an ecclesial act Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order needs to be confirmed by the Church. This confirmation, too, belongs to the priest, who, after the candidates have read the formula of Profession, says: “I confirm your commitment in the name of the Church”.

Consequently, the priest in the celebration of Profession is a *witness*, who attests and manifests the presence and action of the Church; a *guarantor*, who reassures the Church regarding the suitability of the candidates; and *one who ratifies*, or confirms the promises in the name of the Church.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit in the Celebration of Profession

The celebration of profession is geared to the sanctification of those who have been called to follow Christ after the example of St Francis of Assisi, while remaining in their secular state. Sanctification is always the work of the

Father, but it is channelled through the mediation of Christ and of the Church, and is realised in the Holy Spirit. The mediation of Christ and of the Church is especially manifested in the action of the priest, because he alone acts *in persona Christi*.

In the Rite of Profession, the Holy Spirit is invoked, just as He is in the Eucharist and the other sacraments, and in religious Profession. The Spirit comes when invoked, makes Himself present, acts and transforms.

Profession and Eucharist

To celebrate Profession within the Eucharist expresses the *sacrificial dimension of self-giving* inherent in the Profession of the gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order. By promising to live the gospel life, the candidates make themselves entirely available to God and place their own bodies on the altar of Christ's sacrifice as a holy victim pleasing to God.

The close relationship between Profession and the Eucharist is made evident: in that, both the sacrifice of Christ the priest, and that of the newly-professed, offering their lives to the Father, are simultaneously made present. Both are geared towards the permanent glorification of God. Profession, in fact, is not an instantaneous act, an isolated action in the course of one's life; rather it is a commitment *of* life and *for* life. Profession and Eucharist is a life-long project; a life is fully authentic if and when it is marked by the rhythm of the Eucharist.

Baptism and Profession

As an action of the Church, the Profession of the gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order produces ecclesial effects. This is explicitly stated by the Rule in one of its most densely packed theological sections:

“They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words” (Rule 6).

The relationship between Baptism and Profession flows from the relationships of the Secular Franciscan with the Church. Both the Constitutions and the Ritual insist on this Baptism-Profession relationship. The Constitutions explain that:

“Profession is the solemn ecclesial act by which the candidate, remembering the call received from Christ, *renews the baptismal promises* and publicly affirms his or her personal commitment to live the

Gospel in the world according to the example of Francis and following the Rule of the OFS”.

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order aims to help a person “live their baptismal grace and consecration with greater intensity of commitment and diligence

We can see, then, how Profession makes Baptism *more fruitful, stronger and richer*. In the celebration of Profession, the specific secular Franciscan vocation, sealed by the strengthening action of the Spirit, *enriches* the baptised person and confers on him/her a fullness of being by which to bear witness to Christ and for the building up of the body of the Church. Through Profession the implicit potential of Baptism is made explicit and brought to fulfilment. Profession acts upon Baptism, impacts upon it, seals and develops it, founds a new entity and produces a new outpouring of the Spirit.

Relationship with the Church

Profession gives rise to a new relationship with the Church, or rather, the basic baptismal relationship, renewed and perfected in confirmation, is made “stronger” and “closer”. This is emphasized in Rule 6:

“They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been *united more intimately with the Church* by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as *witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church* and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity”.

The mission of secular Franciscans cannot be defined on the basis of particular activities or tasks, but rather in terms of their being. “Fidelity to their own charism, Franciscan and secular, and the witness of building fraternity sincerely and openly are their principal services to the Church, which is the community of love. *They should be recognized in it by their “being”, from which their mission springs*”. (Const 100,3).

Consequently, the concern of the Rule, the Constitutions and the Ritual is to highlight the need to *live as authentic members of the Church*, in line with the stronger and closer bond established with the Church by Profession. All the statements contained in the Rule, the Constitutions and the Ritual about the importance of personal witness must be welcomed and put into practice with full awareness that this is the “fundamental duty of the Lord’s disciples”.

The Commitment of Profession

The formula of Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order reads: “I, N.N., by the grace of God, renew my baptismal promises and consecrate myself to the service of his kingdom”.

The nature of commitment to the gospel life means *dedicating oneself to God* through his people with all the consequences flowing from it, in order to live in union with God and to hold firm to his plan of salvation, *by means of a consecration that is to be lived in the world*.

Profession is the act by which a person places him/herself into the hands of God, enabling God to take hold of him/her, with the result that from the precise moment of profession, the person no longer belongs to him/herself, but is considered as totally “expropriated” and at God’s entire disposal. By virtue of profession, the person becomes God’s property, and therefore “sacred”.

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order means to *consecrate oneself* to a particular task or project, allowing oneself to be totally absorbed by it. The project to which one dedicates oneself totally by profession in the Secular Franciscan Order, is God’s project, and the consequences deriving from consecration are precisely concerned with union with God, adhering to His saving plan and serving the Kingdom by living in and for the world.

The Value of Profession in the OFS

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order has the dignity of a *solemn and religious* commitment entered into with God and the Church, and it cannot be considered inferior to that of “religious”. The Church by approving with its apostolic authority the legislation of our Order throughout the centuries, has always recognised and validated the value of profession in the Secular Franciscan Order. The OFS is “a lay Order, a true Order” constituting “a school of integral Christian perfection”, exactly like any Religious Institute. In this “true Order” a “true Profession” is made, which, while different in content from that made in the religious Institutes strictly so called, has a dignity equal to theirs.

The Promise to Live the Gospel Life

Profession is an action involving the whole person and every human faculty. The commitment assumed by profession is a *commitment of one’s life*, it is existential, concrete, encompassing the whole of a person’s being and

activity; it is not limited to a particular moment, because what is involved is a *life that is wholly committed to and for the gospel*. Therefore, from the moment of profession onwards, it is the gospel which inwardly specifies the life of the Secular Franciscan and commits him/her to the observance of the gospel: profession implies “the will to live the gospel”.

After the manner of St Francis

What is promised is to live the gospel after the manner of St Francis, following in his footsteps and according to his example and the instructions given by him, which today are gathered together in the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. The constant concern to underline the fact that Secular Franciscans intend to live the gospel *after the manner of St Francis* and by means of *this Rule* authenticated by the Church (*Rule 2; Const 1,3; 8,1*), is by no means fortuitous.

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order therefore has this essential structure: the life of Secular Franciscans depends on the gospel, mediated by the inspiration and experience of Francis of Assisi, who from the beginning of his conversion took it as his rule of life and action.

Francis’ intention was simply to return to the *Gospel of Jesus*. Every Franciscan vocation is therefore an *evangelical-Franciscan* vocation, not because Francis’ experience is intended as a substitute for the gospel, but because the gospel is rendered transparent through the mediation of Francis. So, for Franciscans it is a question of learning from Francis and, like him, of knowing no other rule or life except that of the gospel of Jesus. This mediation by Francis lies at the origin of our vocation.

A true vocation is one that takes hold of a person’s whole being, becomes the very substance of one’s being as a person, to such an extent that the individual is unable to think of or define himself except as one who is called to the evangelical-Franciscan life.

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order, as a promise to live the gospel in the manner of St Francis, aims to put before us the radical, light-filled and joyful style in which Francis listens to the gospel and commits himself to live it.

David Gleave ofs, Regional Formator *****

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020

"It is not the time of Your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to You, Lord, and to others."

Pope Francis

How do others see us?



Bro. Chris by Bro. Sammy Tassili



Bro. Peter by Bro. Sammy Tassili

Outlook

Tescos, good, occasionally busy later.

Sainsburys, moderate to good, sale on Corn Flakes.

Asda, slight to moderate, heavy crowds by evening.

Marks and Spencers, fair.

Waitrose fair to moderate.

Lidl, rough at first, moderate later

That's the end of the Today's Shopping Forecast.

H/t Old London / Pax bene/Peter Qualey [Cambridge]

Thoughts of Father Jeremy Davis

A Dowry is a gift from a bride to her husband. Our Lady, in her Litany, is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. In 1381, Richard II consecrated England as her Dowry in that marriage, so that she could give England to the Holy Spirit. Mary is the perfectly faithful Spouse; the fruitfulness of England depends upon the faithfulness of England. There has been much unfaithfulness of England; but on Sunday, March 29th, our Bishops re-consecrated England as the Dowry of Mary. It is a wonderful opportunity of a new beginning- a re-consecration of each one of us.

Exactly coinciding with the Re-consecration of England and preventing so much of its visible expression, the coronavirus epidemic is surely a clear sign of Satan's opposition. It is a warning and a promise. We are in the midst of the war between Our Lady and the Dragon (Apocalypse 12). Victory does not depend upon the faithful being physically present with their Bishop in his consecration, but upon each one of us, wherever we are, making our own consecration: sincerely repenting of all our habits of compromise, all our refusals to follow Our Lord fully as complete disciples of His words and of the Holy Spirit: a real repentance, a new beginning!

Lockdown by Richard Hendrick OFM Cap

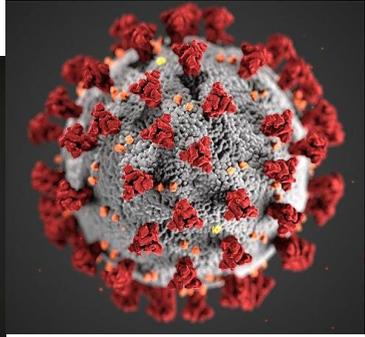
Yes there is fear, Yes there is isolation,
Yes there is panic buying, Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death, But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again. They say that after just a few weeks of quiet.
The sky is no longer thick with fumes, But blue and grey and clear. They say
that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland Is offering free meals and delivery
to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to
welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary. All over the world
people are slowing down and reflecting All over the world people are looking
at their neighbours in a new way. All over the world people are waking up to
a new reality To how big we really are. To how little control we really have. To
what really matters. To Love.
So we pray and we remember that Yes there is fear. But there does not have
to be hate. Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying. But there does not have to be meanness. Yes there
is sickness. But there does not have to be disease of the soul. Yes there is
even death. But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now. Today, breathe, Listen,
behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again, The sky is clearing, Spring is coming, And we are
always encompassed by Love. Open the windows of your soul And though
you may not be able to touch across the empty square, Sing.

.....



Dear God by Ilia Delio

Why have we built walls to separate us instead of bridges to unite us? This is what I pondered. Then I thought to myself, You are infinitely near us O God, within us, among us—the depth and breadth of our very existence. Our panic may be in some strange way a sign of Your presence. Apart from you we are random particles of matter struggling for existence. In You who are the Whole we know ourselves to be whole; each of us is a whole within a larger whole of which you are the center. When You are present we are one and we can pray in a thousand different languages and feel at home together. But when we ignore You, reject You, suppress You, or turn You into an idol, we become scattered fragments of matter without meaningful life together. Only when we move toward one another do you emerge as the center of our lives. As Teilhard lamented, who will give evolution its own God?

HOMILY: IN QUIETNESS AND IN TRUST

We are living through difficult and unfamiliar days, certainly. Most of us are staying at home, trying to maintain some isolation from the world outside, hoping that we might not become ill with Covid 19, and with the aim that by

avoiding this we do not become an additional burden on NHS hospital services. Others are working, some in hospitals, often with a greatly increased risk of catching the infection, or working in a variety of roles in the community, to support the daily needs of society, and also with the increased risk of exposure to the coronavirus. Many have lost employment and income, and are uncertain how to support their family and themselves. So there is widespread anxiety and fear for the future, what if the worst were to happen? ... will there be an end to this epidemic? ... where is God in all this?

Over 2700 years ago Judah and Jerusalem faced a crisis. Ephraim, the northern kingdom, had fallen to the Assyrians, and Jerusalem and the southern kingdom was under threat and looking for help and protection, particularly through an alliance with Egypt. The prophet Isaiah denounced in very direct terms the widespread immorality and exploitation of others in society at the time, and bemoaned that the search for material prosperity, and indifference to the suffering of others, had led to a loss of faith and trust in God, and the neglect of justice and righteousness.

“For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15).

And so it was that Jerusalem gained a respite when King Hezekiah listened to Isaiah’s warning.

In Nazareth, over 700 years later, the virgin Mary found herself in a situation of anxiety and unfamiliarity when the angel Gabriel came to ask her to bear a son named Jesus – “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Yes, the angel told her not to be afraid, but after the angel had gone it must have been her complete faith and trust in God that sustained her through the days ahead, when faced with so many unanswered questions about the future. Joseph, reassured by an angel

in a dream, did not hesitate or doubt, or ask questions, but placed his trust in God that all would be well and according to God's plan.

Mary's quietness and trust are evidenced again at Cana. Her quietness is remarkable throughout the accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, death and resurrection, in the Gospels and Acts, yet she is present throughout, from the Annunciation, to Calvary, and to Pentecost. So apart from her 'Yes' – "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me" (Luke 1: 38), at the Annunciation, and her Magnificat song of praise, to Cana when she tells the servants (and us) to – "Do whatever he (Jesus) tells you" (John 2:5), there are no recorded words of hers. At Cana in quietness (no lengthy pleas or excuses), and in trust, she gave her request to Jesus, and the strength of this is seen in Jesus' response and the miracle that followed.

When we consider Jesus' Passion, and the Gospel accounts of his suffering in the Garden of Olives, through to arrest, torture and mistreatment, trial and interrogation before Herod and then Pilate, and then the Crucifixion, it is striking how little he actually says. His relative silence is indeed that of the lamb led to the slaughter – "He (Herod) questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer" (Luke 23:9) – "Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?'" (John 19:10). Throughout, beneath the pain, humiliation, exhaustion, and anguish of rejection, there is a quiet dignity, an enduring trust in the Father. Even the lonely desolation of the cry – "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15: 34), gives witness to Jesus' humanity in his agony on the Cross, and also points to the reality that quietness and trust are not easy or automatic responses to anxiety and suffering, not for Jesus on the Cross, and most certainly not for us. To maintain quietness and trust when faced with difficulties, uncertainty, suffering and tragedy ... is for all of us, I am sure, a work in progress.

But at this time of trial and great uncertainty, with widespread fear and anxiety caused by the rapid increase in Covid 19 infections, and many

associated deaths, surely our strength as individual Catholics, and as a Church, must lie in trying to achieve greater quietness and a complete trust in God. Not quietness in the sense of artificial calmness, or silence in the face of problems and difficulties, but quietness as a positive determination to live and share our Faith as best we can, without despair, anger, or panic. We have Jesus' calm reassurance – “And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (Matthew 28: 20). We must hold firmly onto that quietness that comes from trusting in God – “My soul clings to you: your right hand holds me fast” (Psalm 62: 9). This is more than just hoping that things turn out for the best; arising from faith, it means consciously trusting in the goodness, love, and *presence in all circumstances*, of God, and believing that ultimately – “All will be well, all will be well, and all manner of thing will be well” (Julian of Norwich).

Chris Whittam ofs, 'Our Lady of the Poor' Fraternity, Cambridge

HOMILY

“You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for.”
[1 Cor.6: 19-20]

This statement by St. Paul often comes to my mind when I hear women say, “It’s my body: I can do what I like with it”, or similar words. I then talk to myself – my wife often hears me – and I retort,

“We are not our own property!” I then go on to remind myself that WHEN WE WERE BORN OUR BODIES WERE LENT TO US AND WHEN WE DIE THEY WILL BE TAKEN AWAY FROM US!

We were born slaves, Adam & Eve’s children and we were ransomed, bought back, by Jesus on the Cross, our ransom being brought about by Holy Baptism. We are then no longer slaves, but servants of Our Lord, but then he elevates us to being his brothers and sisters, princes and princesses, heirs to his kingdom! He even shares his Father with us, when he teaches us the

Lord's Prayer, and shares his Mother with us from the Cross: "Woman, this is your son; this is your Mother" [[John 19:25-27](#)]

We are a new creation, created in the image and likeness of God.

In Genesis 1:26, "God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves...'" . Being born as "poor banished children of Eve", our God-image was distorted by the sin of our first parents, but restored again by the self-sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Now, if we are images of the Triune God, three in one, surely our image in some ways reflects the Trinity of God. How can this be?

We believe that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that these three are inseparable: where you have one you have the others also. Right at the beginning of the Bible, the Holy Trinity is active, in Genesis 1, verse 1. *In the beginning God [the Father] created the heavens and the earth.*

2. *Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's Spirit [Holy Spirit] hovered over the water.*

3. *God said [the Word], 'Let there be light and there was light'.*

And I feel sure that we are all familiar with verse 1 of Saint John's Gospel Prologue:

"In the beginning was the Word [Jesus]

The Word was with God

And the Word WAS God"

And Jesus, while on earth, promised to stay with us for all time and promised to send his Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen us. [Matt.28:20; John.14:26]

How, then, can we reflect God's Trinity? How can *WE* be father, son and Holy Spirit?

A man – let us call him Jack -- marries a wife. They have children. Jack is a father to his children and a son to his parents and a husband to his wife.

When he is with his children, they see him as their father. They never remember a time when he was not there, their dad. He helped to teach them to talk and walk and he would repair broken toys etc.

Jack visits his parents. They see him as their son. They remember when he was born, began to walk and talk and play and laugh. This is the same Jack that his children know, but they know a different person. His parents don't know the daddy in the way his children know, and the children don't know the son in the way his own parents know, but he is the same man.

Jack's wife doesn't know the man when he was a little boy, as his parents do, and they and his little children don't know the husband that their mummy knows. [There is a spousal relationship which is not privy to his children or his parents. We talk of the Holy Spirit as a spouse when religious sisters make their profession].

Obviously, being mere creatures, we are not God, although he lets us share in human creation, but we can be faint shadows of God's Trinity – we can be "Three in One": Father, son and spouse.

Now this great dignity of being "images of God" demands that we **behave** as his images. We have a responsibility. We are not our own property. Just as Nelson said, "England expects that every man will do his duty", we can say that "God expects every baptised person to do their duty", that is, to obey his Commandments, especially to Love God and our neighbour. We are not our own property. We are members of God's family, but also servants in that family, so let us remember we do not belong to ourselves to do just as we are inclined to do, but we have to deny ourselves, do penance, discipline brother body, as Saint Francis managed to do, to become "Images of Christ".

And Saint Francis reminds us, at the end of his prologue, of our destiny, if we do *not* do penance, "And whoever has not done these things will be held accountable [Mt. 12:36] before the tribunal of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the day of judgement.[Rom.24:10

So let us hope that when that time comes, we will be rewarded for using our talents as servants in the Royal Household of heaven, rather than people who

think their bodies are theirs to do with them what they will. We would have to seriously reject God and our precious Catholic Faith to revert to our pre-baptised state. We are not our own property - we have been bought and paid for -we are God's property and may we remain so for eternity!

Bro. Michael Simmonds ofs

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The Prayer of Francis and Clare [Richard Rohr] Wednesday, April 15, 2020 Both St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) and St. Clare (1194–1253) let go of their fear of suffering; any need for power, prestige, and possessions; and any need for their small self to be important. By doing so they came to know who they really were in God—and thus who they objectively were.

Such a profound ability to change is often the fruit of suffering and various forms of poverty. The small self does not surrender without a fight to its death. If we understand suffering to be *whenever we are not in control*, then we see why some form of suffering is absolutely necessary to teach us how to live beyond the illusion of control and to give that control back to God and the flow of reality.

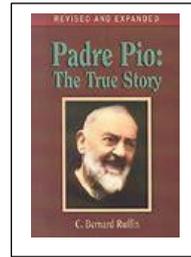
This counterintuitive insight surely explains why these two medieval dropouts—Francis and Clare—tried to invite us all into their happy run downward, to that place of “poverty” and powerlessness where all of humanity finally dwells anyway. They voluntarily leapt into the very fire from which most of us are trying to escape, with total trust that Jesus’ way of the cross could not, and would not, be the wrong path.

By God’s grace, they believed that they could trust the eventual passing of all things, and where they were passing to. They did not wait for liberation later—after death—but grasped it here and now.

.....

PADRE PIO: THE TRUE STORY

C. Bernard Ruffin.



Introduction.

Some of you may not be aware that Pastor C. Bernard Ruffin, author of the definitive biography on **Padre Pio: The True Story**, passed away last 4th May, 2019. He first became aware of Padre Pio in 1966 when on a flight back to college, browsing through the airport bookstore he picked up the book “The Priest who bears the wounds of Christ” by Oscar de Liso. He was fascinated by what he read. Padre Pio would become an interest of a lifetime. “Although I am not a Catholic (he was a Lutheran) Padre Pio has influenced my spiritual life probably more than anybody else with the possible exception of C.S. Lewis.” (Taken from the magazine:- **The Voice of Padre Pio: Vol XLIX N. 6**)

Padre Pio: The True Story

I bought my copy of this book at Walsingham in August 2002, and its battered condition testifies to how often it has provided help and encouragement. Many feel that this is the best and most objective biography on Padre Pio written in the English language. It covers his entire life and does not gloss over the many difficulties he had to face even within the Church and with the Holy Office. For instance there were the “Pious Ladies”! These wild women would rush to the front of Church and woe betide anyone who got in their way. They attacked fellow pilgrims with nail files and other implements and would have been frightening to watch! These women were a major trial to Padre Pio. (They even cut off bits of the habit he was standing in, as keep sakes).

Padre Pio (1887-1968) was a Capuchin Priest who spent most of his life at Our Lady of Grace, San Giovanni Rotondo, not that far from Foggia. He received the stigmata in 1918 which lasted for 50 years, but which vanished a few days before he died. In 1918 the worldwide pandemic of Spanish influenza struck central Italy. (It is believed that more than twenty million people perished worldwide in this epidemic, which forced an estimated billion people to their beds.) Padre Pio's spiritual daughters came to him terrified. "Never fear, put yourself under the protection of the Virgin, do not sin, and the sickness will not overcome you." Although some feel ill, none of them died.

Many came to San Giovanni to attend one of Padre Pio's Masses. These could last up to 4 hours although the normal time was closer to 90 minutes. One Italian journalist stated that his Mass made worshippers feel they were at the foot of the cross. Padre Pio defined the Mass as "a sacred fix with the Passion of Jesus," in which "all calvary" was presented again, extended into the present.

Another feature of Padre Pio's ministry was the confessional. At one time he was spending up to 19 hours hearing confessions until his superiors intervened to make his hours more manageable. It is estimated that he heard approximately 2 million confessions over the course of his lifetime. Padre Pio seemed to know aspects of the lives of his penitents which they tried to hide from him or even themselves. To one woman, who had made a confession, he said "Try to remember the other sin." The woman struggled to think of what this was. "What do you mean, you don't remember anything? Don't you know he could have been a good priest, a bishop, even a cardinal?" The woman started to think and then began to cry, for she had had an abortion.

Padre Pio promoted the Secular Franciscans and attended some groups to give talks. He encouraged his spiritual children (those who had a particular devotion to Padre Pio) to join the Third Order. Of note was the *L'Americana*, Maria Pyle, whom Padre Pio invited to join the Third order of St Francis, when

she decided that becoming a nun was not for her. Selling her jewellery and using the proceeds for the work of Padre Pio, she even smashed her watch, because it had diamonds in it, giving the broken pieces to him.

Ruffin describes many dramatic healings in his book, far too numerous to mention here.

A feature of Padre Pio's life was bilocation, the ability to be in two places at the same time. That is to say Padre Pio, while remaining at San Giovanni Rotondo-often in full view of his confreres- was nonetheless seen, heard, and touched in other parts of Italy, Europe, and the world. (There is some evidence from St Paul's epistles, that St Paul was also able to bilocate.)

In conclusion I heartily commend Ruffin's biography both as an introduction to Padre Pio but also as a reference book, covering many aspects of this Saint's life. If you read only one book on this saintly man, this has to be it!

I close with a short story of my own. In 2018, my wife (Denise) and I decided to visit the Padre Pio Bookshop, 264 Vauxhall Bridge Rd, Victoria. We popped into a tube station to buy a ticket but the machine would not accept our money. We spoke to an attendant who opened the barrier for us and asked us to pay at Victoria station. At Victoria we explained the situation to staff but again the barriers were opened with attendants insisting we just walk through. We therefore got a free trip, something that has never happened to me before or since on the tube! (Ruffin's book speaks of travellers who have been helped by Padre Pio!) At the bookshop, the proprietor, Mrs Kathy Kelly, blessed Denise and myself with one of Padre Pio's mittens (the gloves he used to disguise the stigmata). It was a truly wonderful moment which I will never forget. Kathy mentioned to us that the bookshop would have to close as she could not afford the soaring rates, and in fact it did close a short time later. (Indeed the CTS bookshop near by ceased trading on 31st January 2019, again because of increases in rates.)

Padre Pio:- Born 25th May 1887:

Pietrelcina.

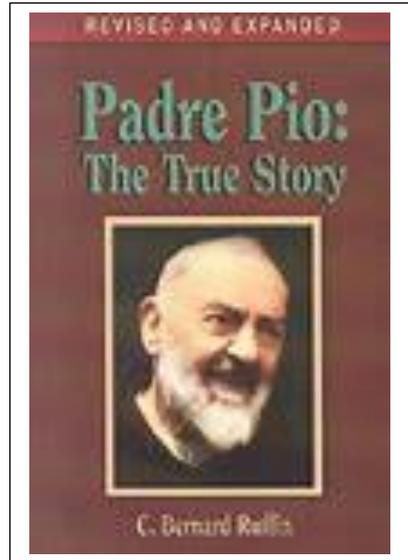
Died 23rd September 1968:

San Giovanni Rotondo.

Declared Blessed: 2nd May 1999.

Canonised: 16th June 2002.

Chris Housden ofs.

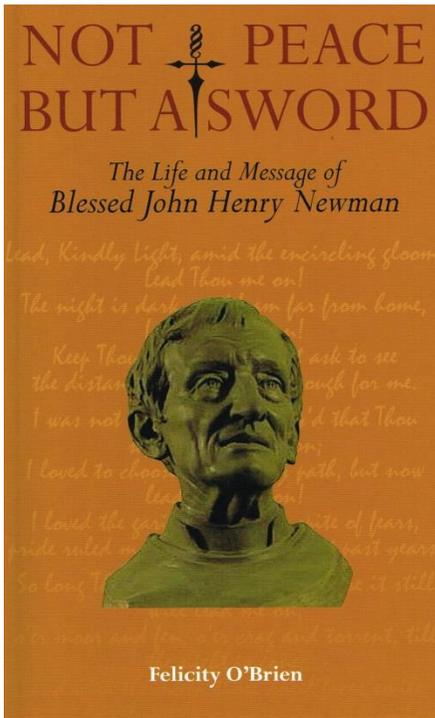


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Can you find the names of sixteen (16) books of the Bible hidden in the paragraph below? [A teaser from David Gleave]

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. A certain luke, kept people looking so hard for facts, and for others, it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers. To others it was a job. We want it to be a most fascinating little moment for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help find them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible in this paragraph.

There really are sixteen names of books hidden in this story! [Answers on page 58]



Book Review of “Not peace but a sword” a short but interesting biography of Blessed John Henry Newman. By Felicity O’Brien.

This is a small but very well presented book of less than 180 pages that gives you the life story and many of the sayings of John H Newman. It gives you a clear picture of his background and childhood and his early career as a student at Oxford and then his becoming well known as a good preacher in the Anglican Church. Then his debate in his mind as to whether the Catholic Church was the true church and his eventual conversion. There are many quotes from his writings and his sermons and it makes me want to read more about him, especially now he has been Canonised as a saint.

ST PAULS Publishing, 187 Battersea Bridge Road, London SW11 3AS
www.stpaulspublishing.com ISBN 978-0-85439-797-6 £10.00
 [Sr. Anne Theresa Simmonds ofs, Gospel to Life fraternity, Bedford]



**Franz Jägerstätter; letters and writings from prison.
 (20th May 1907-9th August 1943) Feast day:- 21st May**

“Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called children of God.”
 Matt 5:9.

Blessed Franz was an Austrian Secular Franciscan who was imprisoned for refusing to fight in the German army during WWII. In making a stand he paid the ultimate price and was executed near Berlin, at the age of 36, on 9th August, 1943. He left behind his wife and three young children.

Writing to his wife whilst in prison he said:-

God's love for us human beings is so great that we can never comprehend it with our human understanding. Although we often offend God and even seriously offend him, God still persistently loves us. Otherwise God would not time and again forgive us. Could we imagine a greater love? He also wrote:-

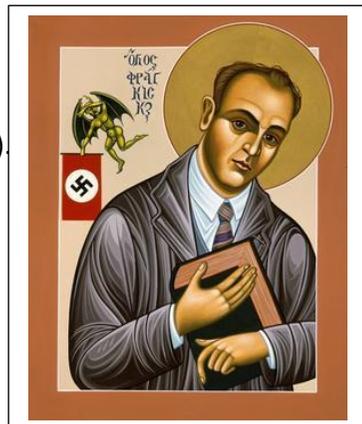
One can hear blackbirds loudly singing outside our windows. Even the birds have, it seems, more peace and joy-although not rational animals- than we human beings who have the gift of understanding. We know what great reward awaits us after this short earthly existence. It should not sadden us very much if we must do without many things now and renounce what our hearts desire now for we shall be rewarded a thousand fold in eternal life.

For Franz Jägerstätter, every human being should preserve his or her moral integrity. Franz refused to take the Wehrmacht's oath of unconditional allegiance to the Führer because he judged to do so for him would be a lie. He also insisted that the war's injustice was obvious in its aims-i.e., the acquisition of oil, ore and in land as well as the forced labour of conquered peoples- and brutal methods.

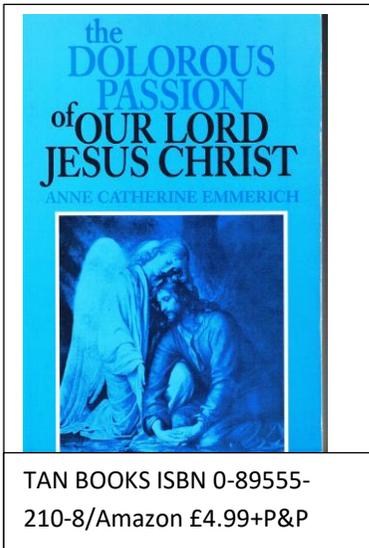
In June 2007, [Pope Benedict XVI](#) declared Franz Jägerstätter a Martyr. On 26 October 2007, he was beatified in a ceremony held by Cardinal [José Saraiva Martins](#) at the [New Cathedral](#) in Linz. His feast day is the day of his [baptism](#), 21 May. He is the patron saint of conscientious objectors. In Franz we have a wonderful example of a Secular Franciscan who was a peacemaker. Please see his Icon below:-

For further information a good source book is **Franz Jägerstätter; letters and writings from prison.** (Edited by Erna Putz).

(ISBN: 9781570758263) available from Amazon's Book Store.
[Bro. Christopher Housden]



The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, being the revelations of Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, 1774-1824



Blessed **Anne Catherine Emmerich**, born in Germany in 1774, became a nun, received the stigmata, had many many visions from the beginning of time [as a child] and later especially of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. She died in 1824 and was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II on 3rd October 2004. I recorded the revelations in March 1995 and I listen to the recordings and meditate on them each Lent. They have become my annual Lenten reading!

There are several different versions of the book but the one I recommend is the one shown here. This has a life of Anne Catherine

first and then describes the Passion from the *Last Supper* right up to and including the Resurrection! Not all publications include the *Last Supper* and the first version I bought did not have it, so when I discovered this version, which was only available in the US at the time, I asked our tertiary sister, Cynthia Savory, who was visiting a daughter, my God-Child, in America, to buy one for me, which she did and, if it is not against my Franciscan Profession in being detached from earthly goods, it is one of my greatest treasures. It is like witnessing the passion as it happens and makes me think of a video without the pictures shown, but they are quite vivid to the mind. If I could have only one book besides the Bible it would be this one. I cannot recommend it strongly enough. Each time I listen to it, I feel closer to my Lord's Passion, by which he took on himself the punishment due to my sins.

[Bro. Michael Simmonds, Bedford]



[A reflection for this year's unique celebration of Easter Sunday, pondering the question: "How do we make sense of being locked in... on Easter?!"]

Pope Francis tells us,

Today we are reminded to place all of our hope in the Lord, especially in these days when this life is full of worry, suffering, and trials.

We remember that Christ is the victor over sin and death.

"Jesus is a specialist at turning our deaths into life, our mourning into dancing (cf. Ps 30:11). With Him, we too can experience a Pasch, that is, a Passover... from desolation to consolation, from fear to confidence. Let us not keep our faces bowed to the ground in fear, but raise our eyes to the risen Jesus. His gaze fills us with hope, for it tells us that we are loved unfailingly... His love remains unchanged."

A Teaser from David Gleave, Ipswich Fraternity

Did you find the names of sixteen (16) books of the Bible hidden in the paragraph below?

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. A certain Luke, kept people looking so hard for facts, and for others, it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers. To others it was a job. We want it to be a most fascinating little moment for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help find them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible in this paragraph

There really are sixteen names of books hidden in this story! [Answers below]

Answers: Mark, Luke, Kings, Acts, Revelation, James, Ruth, Numbers, Job, Amos, Esther, Judges, Titus, Lamentation, Hebrews, Peter

[If you still cannot find them all, don't just look for hidden words, but strings of letters.-Editor]

