

Ordo Franciscanus Secularis

# Viewpoint



## The Southern Region Newsletter 16.2

*Franciscan life is distinct and different from many other Catholic spiritual traditions. It is not better, but is more appropriate and fitting for certain people, lifestyles, and concerns.*

### News from around the Region

Since the last Viewpoint we have had three professions to the Gospel life. In April, **John Moyse**, from the **Portsmouth and Isle of Wight Fraternity** made his solemn profession at the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Shanklin on the Island. Then this month, at our Day of Renewal, **Sibylle Gent** from the **Littlehampton and Worthing Fraternity** and **Shaun Howard** from the **Bracknell Fraternity** made their solemn professions. The Region is blessed by these professions. Pray for them; they join us all in **The Journey of Life, to Life**.

The group on the Island of Jersey continue to show a very keen interest in the Franciscan Way. Betsy Hart and her team are keeping in close contact with these good people to foster their interest and to service their needs.

As the summer approaches we can look forward to another gathering of those with a Franciscan Heart at Wintershall, in the Barn, on Saturday 13 August. Fr Jesmond Pawley will be in attendance and will speak about the Crucifix at Saint Damiano. If you have not been to Wintershall, it is a lovely spot in the Surrey countryside and, if the gathering last year is

anything to go by, this year promises to be a day to remember. There is a poster at the end of this issue.

**Ladywell Fraternity** would like to remind everyone that their Autumn retreat is booking up quickly. This year's is to be led by Fr Jesmond Pawley. A booking form appears at the end of this issue.

Recently Ladywell has had the privilege of becoming 'twinned' with the Fraternity of **St Bonaventure, Mutengene, Cameroon, Africa**, via our Minister Paula Pearce. This is a fairly new Fraternity (2014) and we are gradually getting to know one another. We have just been given 'pray-partners', which will bring us closer together.

During the year, the Fraternity of St Bonaventure celebrates two major occasions. June 16th is the Day of the African Child, when they remember more than 600 children that were massacred during the Apartheid regime in South Africa, and bring together all the orphans, destitute children within their Fraternity area, and provide them with 'back to school' materials with which to start the new academic year. On December 3rd the Fraternity celebrates the International Day of the Physically Challenged and supports them with food, clothes, medication etc.

Ladywell Fraternity will be adding their support to the Fraternity of Bonaventure on these two special occasions.

**Littlehampton and Worthing Fraternity** are arranging a celebration of the life and works of John Bradburne on Monday 8 August at 7pm in St Catherine's Church Hall, Littlehampton. There will be a talk with slides given by the Reverend Ben Bradshaw. Littlehampton and Worthing supports the John Bradburne Memorial Society, a charity supporting the work of the Mutemwa Leprosy Settlement in Zimbabwe. John was a Secular Franciscan who had no medical training but he devoted his life to caring for those in need. In particular, he spent some 10 years looking after the 60 or so residents of Mutemwa. John was full of love for these poor souls; he dressed their sores; he prayed and sang with them in their little chapel, and he guarded them against thieves. John's life was tragically cut short in 1979 when he was murdered. War was raging in the country and John was arrested by a Guerrilla force on suspicion of spying for the Government Security Services. The Commander of the force was satisfied that John was not a spy and ordered his men to take John back to Mutemwa, but on route the men shot John in cold blood. John wrote of the poor lepers:

***Mime it I might and hobble across some stage,  
Rigged up to tell some philanthropic audience  
What is true honour and true courage in our age.***

***Heaven forbid that I shall ever get the chance!  
Dance we down, Fortune – saw I not this very morn.***

***Aristocratic spirits in their smitten frames  
Go nobly on with living.***

In 2002 I watched the TV programme 'Sahara with Michael Palin'. Despite being a seasoned traveller who really enjoyed all his previous travels, it seemed to me that his journey around West Africa had been a challenge which he was unlikely to want to repeat: nothing worked, everything and everyone was late, the food was difficult and there was the ever-present danger of disease. Having watched it I turned to my husband and said, "Heaven forbid that I should ever go to West Africa!" I should never have said that, for within three years the good Lord had led me right into the heart of West Africa and into an adventure that I could never have imagined in a million years.



In 2005 I arrived in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, in order to create a link of friendship between Barrow Hills School (where I am the chaplain) and a little primary school to the far east of Burkina Faso. That done, and over subsequent visits, it was impossible in what is one of the poorest countries in the world to ignore the suffering of those at the bottom of the pile: the handicapped, girls and women. And it was easy to see ways in which it would be possible to change their lives with just a bit of cash, well and wisely spent.

By 2007 and because of the interest which was shown in my work by my friends and so many others, it became necessary to register a charity: Les Amis – Burkina Faso. Since then the charity has built up a number of projects which are delivering life-changing help in a very direct way to some of the most needy people in the world.

In Ouagadougou we set up the Yoann Foundation, named after a little boy who was born with severe cerebral palsy. Handicap is seen as an evil in that part of the world and children born handicapped are likely to be abandoned, along with their mothers, to a life of abject poverty and difficulty. This is what had happened to Yoann and his mum: they had been abandoned. The Yoann Foundation delivers regular practical help to those children and mothers.

East of Ouagadougou we fund a refuge to which young girls can turn if they have run away from a forced young marriage, a common problem in that part of the world. At the refuge we house them, feed them and take care of their every need. More importantly we give them training in a number of skills which they can use to live independently. For the younger girls (and yes, there are some very young girls), we house them, feed them and send them to school.

Not only do we have these larger-scale projects, we pick up on individuals who are suffering real difficulties in life because of injustice. For instance, Abelle is a lovely young mum whose husband was so abusive that she had to run away, taking her little girl with her. She was pregnant at the time and in due course gave birth to a son who had Down's Syndrome. Her entire family blamed her having run away for the handicap of her child, and disowned her. I don't often cry when I travel around the country, but when I met Abelle for the first time I cried. Since then we have given her help which has got her back onto her feet. When I saw her again in February this year I could not believe how much better her life is now, thanks to that help.

**Please help me to help those who cannot help themselves.** If you have access to a computer and to the internet please visit my website ([www.les-amis-bf.org.uk](http://www.les-amis-bf.org.uk)) and, particularly, all the newsletters which are posted on the website. If you read them, you will get a really good feel for all the work that we do.

I just want to add that my charity guarantees that 100% of donations go to the needy: not a single penny is used on the necessary costs of running a charity.

*Gillie Nicholls OFS*



Abelle

## **Our Journey of Life to Life**

### ***Park Place 2016 - The Franciscan Journey before and after Profession***

Nelson Mandela used the following poem at his induction as president after more than 40 years in prison; it reminds us that we must share ourselves and our thoughts with others.

***Our Greatest Fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.  
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?  
You are a child of God.  
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.  
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people  
Won't feel insecure around you.  
We are born to make manifest the Glory of God within us.  
It is not just in some of us, it's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do  
the same.  
As we are liberated from our own fear,  
Our presence automatically liberates others.***

### ***Every journey starts with the first step – Lau-Tzu***

The journey of a thousand miles (a long journey) begins beneath one's feet. Rather than emphasising the first step Lau-Tzu regarded action as something that arises naturally from stillness. Even the longest journey must begin where you stand.

You have been sung into being by God and you have been claimed for God at your Baptism. You were buried and raised with Christ through the waters of baptism.

***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being.  
What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all the people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it..... No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son who is close to the Father's heart, who has made Him known.***

### ***God comes bidden or unbidden.***

This is popularly attributed to Carl Gustav Jung but really it comes from Desiderius Erasmus. It is an ancient Spartan proverb which means that we do have not control over the vocation; only God has that control. We just respond, or not!

***Franciscan life is distinct and different from the many other Catholic spiritual traditions. It is not better, but is more appropriate and fitting for certain people, lifestyles and concerns.***  
(Rob Breen OFS PhD)

***Oh Lord, you have seduced me, and I for my part have let myself be seduced***

*When did you first begin to become attracted to the Franciscan way of life?*

*Who or what started you off on your Franciscan journey?*

So you become an Enquirer and then a Candidate within your Fraternity, all the while continuing on this journey with God to God

As you continue slowly on this journey you savour new things about you and your relationship with God. You discover the beautiful things and you discover the darker things but, most of all, you discover how God holds you and feeds and waters you just as is necessary for you. Your Formator, as your friendly guide in the early part of the journey, and your sponsor as companion, will merely be aids in this and they will encourage you through bible study and prayer to allow yourself to hear and respond to God's call for you.

Your Fraternity will play their part too. They will encourage and support you and weep with you in times of darkness and rejoice with you in times of new understanding. Just as Francis and his brothers were supports for one another.

***Rejoice with those who rejoice and Weep with those who weep.*** (Romans 12:15)

*What help did you value most on your journey to Profession?*

*How did being in Fraternity help you on your Franciscan Journey?*

Now you reach the time of decision.

Profession is about choice. As individuals we choose a Way. There is acceptance by the Church, and by Order in the persons of the Fraternity and its Council – yes – but we as individuals are responding to the call from God – WILL YOU FOLLOW ME, OR WOULD YOU RATHER GO YOUR OWN WAY? It is a free choice. No one forces us, and God certainly does not force us. Indeed, God CANNOT force us to do anything! So God is calling us to a Way of Life He has chosen for us – a Franciscan Way.

So what is special about this Franciscan Way for us and what is so attractive that we decide to dedicate our whole lives to it?

***Francis was alive with an awareness of the living Jesus. He had a unique ability to attract people to follow him in their search for the Lord. His open approach to the gospels and the person he found there are hallmarks of every Christian; yet Francis gives us an***

***enticing, concrete example to imitate. In Francis we find someone like ourselves who was able to make the Gospels come alive and Jesus real. If we are to follow him, we must explore some of the directions he took to find this living Jesus of Francis.***

*Benet A Fonck OFM (Called to Follow Christ: P5)*

Why do we want to ***embrace the gospel way of life by following the example and words of Saint Francis of Assisi?*** (From the rite of Profession)

***Presents a challenge by promoting daily, ongoing, lifelong conversion – called Franciscan Penance – as the daily lifestyle. It requires new seeing and listening, taking this to heart in dialogue, change of behaviour and lifestyle, and offering this to the world in love.***

*Rob Breen OFS, PhD*

*What is so special about this journey?*

*How is your journey unique to you?*

*How is the Franciscan journey different from any other Christian journey?*

There are those who are fellow Pilgrims but there are those who are presently strangers on the journey.

Pilgrims rarely know their route, they may be sure of their ultimate destination but the route may not be straightforward and often difficult.

Pilgrims are rarely alone. More often than not they are a group of good friends on the same path.

The choice we make, indeed the choice we here have made carries with it responsibilities. We are called in to a FAMILY. So, we have responsibilities not only to ourselves but to the members of this our chosen family as well. We do well to reflect on these responsibilities; after all, we are all on this journey together.

*Who are our fellow pilgrims?*

*What responsibility do we have to our fellow pilgrims?*

*Who are the Strangers?*

*How do they influence our journey?*

FINALLY, that very same Spirit that moved Jesus of Nazareth 2000 odd years ago as he walked the earth is the very SAME Spirit OFFERED to us.

God became Man out of pure LOVE. Love has to be shared; it is a two way thing!  
Unrequited love is love lost! God shares His love with the SON. No one knows the Father except the SON. The Son has shown us the way to God's love because He, the Son, is the way to God's love. We came from being with God and our life's journey is through Christ, with Christ, and IN Christ to be with God. For the fullness of God's grace is man fully alive (St Irenaeus). God wants ALL men to be with Him. And God knows how each and every one of us can best achieve that. We are called to BE, to be FRANCISCAN, to be in Christ with God.

***My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me;  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.  
And I hope I have that desire in all I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.  
And I know that if I do this you will lead me through the right road though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my peril alone.***

*Thomas Merton – Thoughts of Solitude*

**-o-o-o-o-o-**

This was the theme of our Day of Renewal this year. Betsy Hart and I drew up the format together and she presented on the day. The questions were answered by small discussion groups. If you were there, you might like to meditate on the questions again. If you could not make it, then perhaps the questions offer a challenge to you. I have an eye on at least one of them as the basis of an article in the future. Why not take up your pen and share your thoughts?

We are all on this journey, some further on than others. Your calling is unique to you; the journey is your journey, even though you share it with others. Do please feel free to share your experiences; we all have those darker moments when we feel we are going backwards rather than growing towards God. We are Family; we are Fraternity; we should help each other along in this life's pilgrimage.

Peace be with you all

**Edward Cuerden**

***Viewpoint is published 4 times a year, at the end of February, May, August, and November. Copy for input should reach me by the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month. Edward Cuerden, 94 Mays Lane, Fareham, PO14 2ED: [cuerden2ed@talktalk.net](mailto:cuerden2ed@talktalk.net)***

Southern Region Order of Franciscans Secular

# Welcome

ALL those with a `Franciscan Heart` are warmly invited to a

## Franciscan Celebration

at Holly Barn,  
Wintershall Estate,  
Bramley, Guildford,  
Surrey GU5 OLR

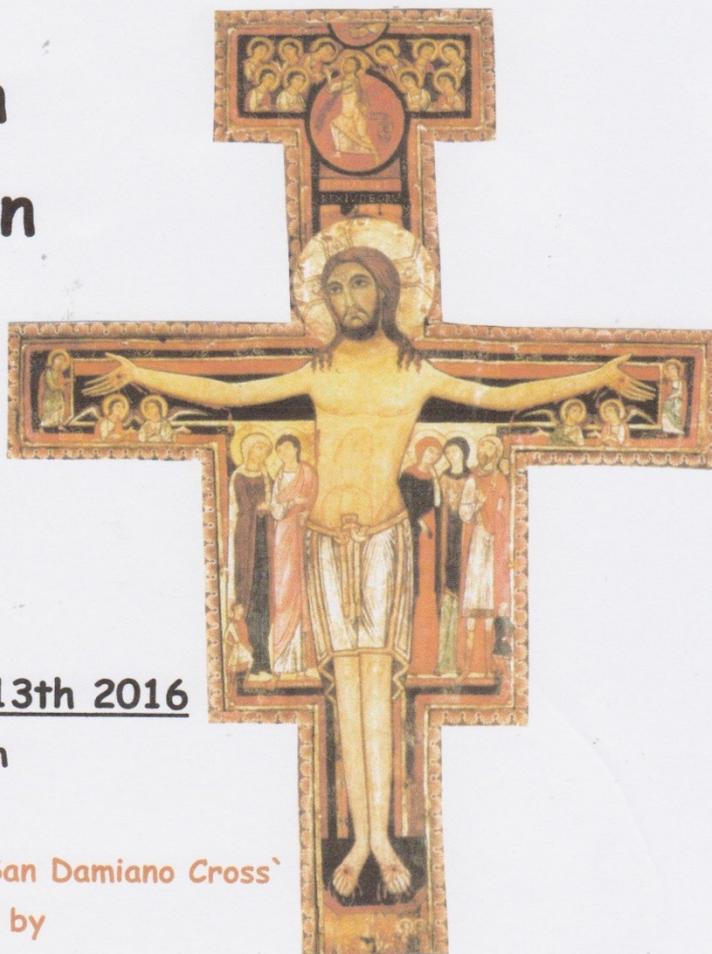
on

Saturday August 13th 2016

10.30 am - 4.00 pm

`A Reflection on the San Damiano Cross`  
will be led by

Father Jesmond Pawley OFM Conventual



Please let us know if you are able to join us in this celebration and for directions to Holly Barn. Bring a packed lunch ..... tea, coffee and soft drinks will be provided.

Contact: Jennie McManus, 1 Cricketts Hill, Shere, GU5 9JY 01483 20 3642  
s@jenniemcmanus.plus.com

*Pace e Bene*

*OFS Fraternity of the Holy Spirit 2016*

## Retreat at Ladywell Convent, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1ST

Friday 18th November from 4 pm until after lunch on Sunday 20th November.

***This is a wonderful opportunity to spend some quiet time in contemplation and reflection within the Franciscan family. Members of other Franciscan Fraternities and all those with a `Franciscan heart` will be most welcome to join us.***

The Retreat will be led by Father Jesmond Pawley OFM Conventual, Spiritual Assistant to the OFS Southern Regions. Father Jesmond is known for his deep Franciscan spirituality.

Cost: Residential £145 / Non-Residential £80. Residential is encouraged to gain maximum benefit from the Retreat

If you would like to book a place, then please complete and return the form below to: Jennie McManus, 1 Cricketts Hill, Shere, Surrey GU5 9JY

or e-mail: [s@jenniemcmanus.plus.com](mailto:s@jenniemcmanus.plus.com)

or telephone: 01483 20 3642

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Name (please print):.....

Telephone  
number:.....

E-mail address (please print):.....

Any special requirements (dietary/accessibility):.....  
.....

Please tick as appropriate:

I would like to book a residential place at the cost of £145 and enclose my deposit of £25 (    )

I would like to book a non-residential place at a cost of £80 and enclose my deposit of £25 (    )

All cheques should be made payable to ***OFS Ladywell***

Please return this tear-off slip by July 31st, with full payment by September 30th 2016