



EAR Newsletter February 2016 Hear EAR Here!

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

At our last EAR Regional Council Meeting I was designated the task of taking over the publication of our newsletter. Following in the footsteps of Brother David Gleave is no easy task! As I hinted when I first told you of the changeover, I will try to get news to you at frequent intervals, using the wonderful [when it works] email system, so here is my first effort.

So far, I have only received TWO contributions for publication, although I feel sure that other fraternities in the region are doing SOMETHING!

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

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

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

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

Jaci reported that the Norwich fraternity were now addressing each other as Brother or Sister, as had been the custom some years ago. There was discussion about this and Sr. Rosalie commented on how the tradition in the Franciscan Third Order of wearing the habit and being called Brother or Sister had ended. Daphne said that this tradition had ended when the new Rule came out, and she was not in favour of a return to it.

We then had our Epiphany party with a shared lunch and, after prayer to the Holy Spirit, the distribution of an admonition of St. Francis, the name of a saint, a proverb, a saying and a present to each person. Jaci said that St. Francis had left 28

admonitions, which in the medieval world were more than a warning, to be the strict, practical application to life of a Biblical passage.

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

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NORWICH PAX ET BONUM FRATERNITY

Today (16 Jan) Jim Powell was admitted to be a candidate for profession in Walsingham at the Walsingham Link Group meeting. Jim has been a member of the Anglican Tertiaries since the 1960s and was received into the Catholic Church under the Ordinariat 18 months ago. He has been an Enquirer for a year and is a very knowledgeable Franciscan. He has very bad eyesight and finds travelling to Norwich quite an ordeal. The formation of the Walsingham Link Group has obviously greatly helped him. Thanks especially to Br Francis Walsh for re-energising the Walsingham Group which many years ago was a fraternity in its own right.

We also held our, what has become, annual Franciscan Carol Service in Our Lady of the Annunciation Church in Poringland on 29 December. This was officiated by Fr Pdraigh Hawkins and was followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the parish rooms. Interspersed among carols, some sung and some on guitar only, we read the Celano account of the Nativity in Greccio, as well as prayers from the Passio. There were about 25 parishioners present in addition to our own fraternity members. That is about all I can muster up at the moment! Peace and All Good, Rob.

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BEDFORD GOSPEL TO LIFE FRATERNITY

It

was the feast of St. Angela Merici on 27th January. She was a Franciscan Third Order member who founded the Ursulines in 1516 to teach the faith to poor girls.

Several of us attended several different churches during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and everyone is different in their approach but all are working to bring more knowledge of Jesus and his love for all people to all the folk around.

We should all be praying very hard for peace in this troubled world and particularly for all the poor displaced people who have become refugees and migrants and who have no homes or clothes or schools for their children and remember how Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus were in the same situation when they had to flee to Egypt. I am sure we will give what we can to help them but prayer is the most likely to help them.[From Minister Anne Simmonds' Monthly Memo for January]

As previously reported in the TAU, we have worked jointly with the *Associates of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit [DHS]* and the *Secular Branch of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary [SS.CC]*. On 30th January we had a joint meeting with them. There were *six ofs, four SS.CC and one DHS*.

We had Exposition and confessions from 12:00 to 12:45 and a delicious Bring and Share lunch from 13:00. After lunch we began with the Prayer to the Holy Spirit from our handbook, page 106. We then listened to Anne Simmonds & Michael Mortimer who read out the Rule Prologue, again from the handbook. Different options for future meetings were discussed and arranged. The ofs chaired the meeting and we read extracts from Pope Francis' Letter to Migrants and Refugees. The most telling part being when the Pope noted that "indifference and silence regarding the refugees and migrants, leads to complicity." We told them that from one of our meetings we decided to give every penny we collected to Cafod for refugees and migrants. We collected just over £100.00. [We repeated this the day after our joint meeting, this time for Christians suffering persecution and again raised over £100.00 which we sent to ACN -Aid to the Church in Need].

Each group then gave a mini report of what we have been doing. Anne reported extra to monthly meetings, 11th Aug: The Transitus of St. Clare; the Transitus of St. Francis, 4th October and our Epiphany party on 6th January and a day of recollection at Arkley in September with Fr. James McCurry when he spoke of Franciscan littleness. We make monetary donations to our local SVP conferences, our local homeless centre and the John Bradburne leper colony in Zimbabwe.

After months of preparation we have produced a joint leaflet, advertising our Secular Franciscan Order, the Daughters of the Holy Spirit Associates and the Seculars of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. We also offered a leaflet that could be used for the Novena to the Holy Spirit. Last year we jointly called a meeting at which we offered three different forms of Novena to the Holy Spirit. About 30 people attended. We are now working on a joint poster for display in the parishes. [Anne Simmonds gave a talk at ALL MASSES in our five churches in the Pastoral area in the last couple of months and no-one has shown any interest.

The ofs are planning a pilgrimage to Northampton later in the year to pass through the Jubilee Holy Door and say appropriate devotional prayers. The DHS Associates gave us a leaflet from Westminster Cathedral with the Stations for the Holy Door experience, which we may be able to use in Northampton.

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The second reading from the Office of Readings for the Memoria of St. Joseph of Leonessa, Capuchin Priest [1556-1612] on 4th February may be of interest, so I include it here:

A reading from a sermon of Saint Joseph of Leonessa :

EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A LIVING BOOK OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING

The Gospel, the good news of the coming of the Lord into the world through a virgin, is not chiefly something to be written on parchment, but in our hearts. This is the difference between the written law and the law of grace: for the former was inscribed on tablets of stone. but the latter is printed on the hearts of men [and women] by the infusion of the grace of the Holy Spirit. This was promised by the Lord, through Jeremiah when he said: "I will make my covenant with you, a covenant unlike that which I made with your fathers." Concerning this new covenant he adds: "I will put my law in their hearts."

Therefore every Christian should be a living book in which the teaching of the Gospel can be read. So said **Paul to the Corinthians**: "You yourselves are our letter [of recommendation] written...not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not on

tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts". The parchment is our heart, the writer is the Holy Spirit using me, for "my tongue is as nimble as the pen of a scribe".

Would that that the tongue of the preacher moved by the Holy Spirit, having been dipped into the Blood of the spotless lamb, might write nimbly in your hearts today. But how can one script be imposed upon another? Unless the former is erased, the new cannot be written.

Avarice, pride, lust and other vices are written on your hearts. How shall we write humility, honesty and the other virtues on them, unless the previous vices are wiped out? If men had such writings in their hearts, each of them would be a book as we said above; he would instruct others by his mode of life. For which reason Paul adds, "You yourselves are our letter...to be known and read by all."

Prelates and preachers should work for the conversion of souls in such a way as to draw all pleasantly to the way of truth. Men are not all moved by the same methods. Wherefore Paul, the untiring minister of Christ and lover of souls, said, "To the Jews I became a Jew...to those outside the law I became as one outside the law." In fact, he adapted himself to all, so that he adds, "I have become all things to all men, to gain all to Christ."

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On Sunday 7th February, three of us from Bedford travelled to Clacton for a very special occasion – the Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order of Father Frank Jackson, ex-Anglican, of the Church of the Sacred Heart, Frinton, at the church of Our Lady of Light and St. Osyth, Clacton. The Parish priest, Canon Peter Connor, himself a tertiary, who guided Fr. Frank through his formation, concelebrated the Mass with Fr. Frank and Fr Jesmond Pawley OFM Conv. So Canon Peter Connor of and Fr. Frank Jackson of are priests in adjacent parishes, which bodes well for the Clacton fraternity. Let us support them with our prayers.

In his homily before the Profession, Father Jesmond said that Fr. Frank is not only Fr. Frank, but also someone who is going to repeat his Baptismal Promises and his Confirmation. Christ gives us the strength to live the Gospel life. Quoting from the day's reading of St. Paul to the Corinthians [15:1-11] he said, "Brothers, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preached to you... I taught you what I had been taught

myself, namely that Christ died for our sins.” We follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis through Baptism and Confirmation [plus the Priesthood]. God’s mercy is greater than our sinfulness. St. Francis experienced this. And Fr. Frank knows he is a sinner and that God loves him. Most of us do not remember our Baptism, but I am going to take more seriously my life with Christ. Peter in the Gospel of today said, “Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.” Do not be afraid. Continue to believe. Lord, what do you want from me? How am I going to live the Gospel life myself? Maybe it’s time I started doing it. Let us pray that Fr. Frank will live the Gospel life in the footsteps of St. Francis.



Left to right: Bro. Willem Botha ofs, Minister; Fr. Jesmond Pawley OFM Conv.;
Fr. Frank Jackson ofs; Canon Peter Connor ofs

It was good to see Judy still active in the fraternity, as treasurer, although she suffers much with mobility; Léda Clare Aynedjian, secretary, who makes beautiful rosaries for sale, played the organ for us very ably. As fellow tertiaries we were invited to a

slap-up buffet with jolly good company, including Father Frank's wife as well as Willem's wife, and several children of assorted ages from about two to 17. Start them young! How about starting Franciscan Youth at Clacton?

This is my first effort at producing a form of TAU 'magazine'. It relies on you, dear readers, to send your news to me so that I can spread it around. Email me: michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com Please inform me of any errors and criticise this publication so that it can be improved.

Please print copies for your fraternity members who do not have a computer and forward it to those who have.