



**SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER +  
EAST ANGLIAN REGION  
SPRING 2021  
ISSUE 13**



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April 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ and St. Francis,

Welcome to our Spring magazine. We are greatly privileged to be called by Baptism to follow Christ, albeit with our crosses, so we are called Christians. We are the Easter People and Alleluia is our song! This should make us happy people because we know that Jesus Christ died for each one of us to offer us a ticket to Eternal Paradise with our sins wiped away!

Most of us have all had a tough year 2020, some more so than others, so there are many people who have lost relatives and friends, employment, and have a furthering of health issues other than Covid, and may indeed have been struck with the virus, perhaps with further suffering from after Covid. So let us spread our joy and share it with people around us and try to cheer our fellow humans - ALL our brothers and sisters – and let them see that we Christians are a happy people and we want everyone to be happy too! I quote the response to the intercessions in the Divine Office for Easter Octave Friday Morning Prayer: “MAKE US RADIANT WITH CHRIST’S GLORY”!

The daily ending verse from the Preface of Easter up to and including the Feast of the Ascension is: THEREFORE, OVERCOME WITH PASCHAL JOY, EVERY LAND, EVERY PEOPLE EXULTS IN YOUR PRAISE AND EVEN THE HEAVENLY POWERS, WITH THE ANGELIC HOSTS, SING TOGETHER THE UNENDING HYMN OF YOUR GLORY AS THEY ACCLAIM: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD GOD OF HOSTS..... So let us be joyful on earth as they are in heaven!

Perhaps the vaccines will soon enable us to renew our charism of fraternity by once again meeting in common, sharing our Franciscan joy with each other! Praise the Lord for all his blessings!

[Editor]

*Dear Sisters and Brothers,*

*It has now been twelve months since I was elected as your Regional Minister. What a year it has been and what a time to take over as Minister. I feel that I have been fully involved in all things Franciscan while attending Regional and National Meetings all through the lens of Zoom. What an experience it has been when all I have really wanted to do was to be in a room with my brothers and sisters and to hear the chat and banter with the kettle boiling in the background.*

*I would like to say “well done” to you all for keeping going and keeping in touch with your Fraternity members through whatever means accessible be it telephone, letter, or the internet. It has not been easy for any of us but there is “light” and movement as we come out of hibernation (or it feels like it).*

*I have found the past year a time for deep thought and reflection. I have opened myself to the Holy Spirit and feel that I have been led through a process of “Order, disorder, reorder” (Richard Rohr), the process is ongoing, and it has been disorientating at times but equally I have been led to some wonderful writers and thinkers from all kinds of backgrounds and feel that I have been opened to possibilities and as one speaker recently said a “spiritual flourishing”.*

*I am also fully aware that I am not “an island” and any spiritual flourishing that I may experience is to be used for the “greater good”. “In the midst of a great pandemic, unprecedented poverty, and natural disasters alongside never-before-seen development of new technologies and great wealth, nothing can be more important than wrestling with what it really means for humans to flourish” (Elaine Howard Eckland, Herbert S. Autrey, Chair in Social Sciences, Rice University).*

*Reflecting on this has drawn me to the following prayer from ietermaritzburg*

*Agency for Christian Social Awareness, South Africa and based on Jerimiah 6, 13-15; 8. 11*

*For our incapacity to feel the sufferings of others,  
and our tendency to live comfortably with injustice,  
**God forgive us.***

*For the self-righteousness which denies guilt,  
And the self-interest which strangles compassion,  
**God forgive us.***

*For those who live their lives in careless unconcern,  
Who cry 'Peace, peace' where there is no peace,  
**We ask your mercy.***

*For our failings in community,  
our lack of understanding,  
**We ask your mercy.***

*For our lack of forgiveness, openness, sensitivity,  
**God forgive us.***

*For the times we were too eager to be better than others,  
when we are too rushed to care,  
when we are too tired to bother,  
when we don't really listen,  
when we are too quick to act from motives other than love,  
**God forgive us.***

*Jesus Christ gave up his life on a cross that we might have life and have it in abundance. I know what I am being asked to do with my life and with prayer and contemplation and the support of my Fraternal Family I can do my best to be "in Christ". "To be "in Christ" is to be identified with the Living One who is not to be sought among the dead, for the Living One is the One who is Coming to Be" (Beatrice Bruteau, The Grand Option: Personal Transformation and a New Creation, University of Notre Dame Press, 2001)*

*I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a Holy and Blessed Easter Season. Sr Brigid Regional Minister*

**Talk by Br. Dónal OFM** (for Spring OFS EAR magazine)

Christopher Lamb, Vatican columnist for the Tablet magazine, writes 6 March, that Pope Francis has and does turn increasingly to the Franciscans as well as his own religious order of the Jesuits, especially at times of turmoil and difficulty, and even opposition from some quarters from within, in his pursuit for renewal of the Church. It is quite clear that the holy father, who takes the name “Francis” (of Assisi), wishes to imitate the spirituality and charism of St Francis of Assisi and of the Franciscans to bring about this renewal and once again “rebuild” the Church once again. Thus, of the three Encyclicals written by Pope Francis, we have two, “Laudato Si” and “Fratelli Tutti”, which are very much Christo-centric and Franciscan based.

Some people may claim that Jesuits are viewed as much more rational in their teaching and practice than Franciscans; that they are more “heady” and we more “heart”! Certainly, in St Francis we see a warm-hearted, emotional man which helped to shape and inform his spiritual approach, life and teaching. Perhaps, our holy father has a need to seek support and guidance from the “head” of the Jesuit and the “heart” of the Franciscan, and that this enhances his teachings of these encyclicals and his pastoral care as Pontiff?

I was once following a pastoral course in Ireland some 19 years ago and had placements in the critical wards of a large hospital. I was there as an acting “student chaplain” for all patients (and staff) whatever be their faith or no faith background; thus, we were requested not to wear any public religious attire! I was visiting this male patient having told him I was a chaplain in training. Out of the blue, he asked, “are you a priest”? I said “yes, I am”. “Are you an order priest”? I replied “yes, I am”! A slight pause and then he asked, “are you a Franciscan”? There was a prolonged silent pause from me due to my amazement, before I responded, “yes, I am a Franciscan”! There and then, and to this day, I have never forgotten this encounter which was both a shock and a wonderful experience. I dearly hope that this man was able to come to this opinion because he had met with Franciscans himself and had been

touched by our charism, ministry and how we are seen by others, in the Church and world, operating pastorally from the “heart”!

As Franciscans, we have been called by God, chosen for the world of today, to be that witness in imitation of St Francis and radiate our love and compassion to others, especially the needy, vulnerable and marginalised of our society and Church. In and through our Fraternities, we reach out to all who are our sisters and brothers. As individuals and communities, we live out this vocation and commitment to witness and bring forth values based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and followed on by Franciscan teaching, practices and ways. We do this, not alone, but as Franciscans together.

All of us have endured over a year of the Coronavirus pandemic. This has, I am sure, affected us, directly and indirectly, in some way. We have seen, perhaps personally experienced, much suffering, grief and heartache, possibly anxiety and fears. Just as St Francis reached out to the Lepers, we too try to do the same, by our involvement, support and prayers, and be alongside those experiencing these emotions because of this terrible disease and its consequences for ourselves, our neighbourhood, country and world. We have also witnessed great acts of kindness, generosity and loving help to those less fortunate, materially and spiritually. As the Pope reminds us in “Fratelli Tutti”, completed during the pandemic, it is a necessary need that the goodness and kindness shown during the times of this pandemic, be never lost, but encouraged and grow so that we may all rediscover a sense of a common humanity, based on God’s creation and fostered by fraternity and friendship. We have reached a crossroad as a global world. The Coronavirus pandemic has underlined how much we depend on each other to survive. Our common humanity demands that we, as Franciscans, change unjust systems which favour the better off and abandon the poor of our world.

In this Eastertide, may we rejoice in the risen Christ once again as renewed people following Jesus Christ. Let us as “Easter people” and as Franciscans, have a sense of hope and vigour that despite the pandemic and the coming out of lockdown restrictions, we may never give up living out the Gospel

values of Jesus Christ, advocated in the teachings of our holy father St. Francis and currently by his holiness the pope. As we enter a “new normality”, let us move forward with new strength and commitment as Franciscans of today. Alleluia!

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### **Fraternity Reports in alphabetical order**

**Bedford Gospel to Life Fraternity** Unfortunately not many of our fraternity have computers, so, during the lock-down we have been functioning as best as we can by post and telephone. Our main concern has been our Sister Petronella, who is chair-bound in sheltered accommodation. She does not have, and is not able to operate, a computer, so does not have access to livestream masses. We have not been allowed to take the Holy Eucharist to her and we ourselves have been in lockdown [both over 80] and Anne has Parkinson's and no spleen so is considered as being very vulnerable. We have tried to get a priest or deacon to visit Petronella but as far as we understand no-one has visited her from the Church during lockdown! Every few days I send her Bishop Barron's short daily homilies [from the internet] back-to-back with a coloured picture to go with the text [artistically drawn by a talented parishioner, an Associate of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit].

At the end of each month, at about the time when we would have had our monthly community meeting, I post out a study sheet with book references or a copy from a Franciscan book or some incident in the life of St. Francis. We studied No.5 – Meditation – in March]

We have been praying for years for new members and our Good Lord has blessed us with two men enquirers from Northampton Cathedral [we zoom our formation sessions] and one lady who has recently moved to Bedford from St. Alban's and is finishing her visitor formation with the Norwich fraternity where she began it before moving to Bedford. Praise the Lord!

*Financially we are ok. A few cash donations have topped up our coffers and some of our members are putting aside each month what they might have put into the Common Fund, and getting it to the treasurer, Michael Mortimer, as a lump sum.*

*We are longing to be able to take the Holy Eucharist to Petronella and to meet again as a community.*

*Acting Minister Michael Simmonds [In place of Anne Simmonds who is unable to cope any more, having Parkinson's].*

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**Cambridge "Our Lady of the Poor" Fraternity**

## But a Letter on a Theme;



"I counted them all out. I counted them all back in."

We are still all here; Jaci, Chris, Trudie, Trish, Daphne, Annette, Noelle, plus Shawn, Michael(s) all the way from Bedford and Maria, from Spain, and myself.

You might not know, but Annette is now our Archivist, as well as being our Librarian.

But our communal endeavours are still proscribed, as are those of all; we are *communitatis in diaspora*, thanks to Google Meet and the good offices of Maria.

Apart from the Office, we do have in common the Angelus and the Chaplet Novena, our study of Fratelli Tutti, and ongoing formation. This set me thinking of an aspect of prayer, not given much consideration; solitary prayer in communion with the saints, and of what Pope Francis has said about it. There is much material to be had, so I've abridged and selected only a few points.

There is no grief in the Church  
that is borne in solitude, there  
are no tears shed in oblivion,  
because everyone breathes and  
participates in one common  
grace.

The saints are still here not far from us; and their representations in churches evoke that “cloud of witnesses” that always surrounds us (see Heb 12:1). At the beginning, we heard the reading from the passage from the Letter to the Hebrews. They are witnesses that we do not adore – that is understood that we do not adore these saints – but whom we venerate and who in thousands of different ways bring us to Jesus Christ, the only Lord and Mediator between God and humanity. A “saint” that does not bring you to Jesus is not a saint, not even a Christian. A saint

makes you remember Jesus Christ because he or she trod the path of living as a Christian.

The saints remind us that even in our lives, however weak and marked by sin, holiness can unfold. Even at the last moment. In fact, we read in the Gospel that the first saint canonized by Jesus Himself was a thief, not a Pope. Holiness is a journey of life, a long or short or instantaneous encounter with Jesus. But he or she is always a witness, a saint is a witness, a man or woman who encountered Jesus and followed Jesus. It is never too late to be converted to the Lord who is good and great in love (see Ps 103:8).

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The Catechism explains that the saints contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. [...] Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world" (CCC, 2683). There is a mysterious solidarity in Christ between those who have already passed to the other life and we pilgrims in this one: from Heaven, our beloved deceased continue to take care of us. They pray for us, and we pray for them and we pray with them.

The connection in prayer between ourselves and those who have already arrived—we already experience this connection in prayer here in this earthly life. We pray for each other, we make requests and offer prayers.... The first way to pray for someone is to speak to God about him or her. If we do this frequently, each day, our hearts are not closed but open to our brothers and sisters. To pray for others is the first way to love them and it moves us toward concretely drawing near. Even in conflictual moments, a way of dissolving the conflict, of softening it, is to pray for the person with whom I am in conflict. And something changes with prayer. The first thing that changes is my heart and my attitude. The Lord changes it so it might

be turned into an encounter, a new encounter so that that the conflict does not become a never-ending war.

The first way to face a time of anguish is by asking our brothers and sisters, the saints above all, to pray for us. The name given to us at Baptism is not a label or a decoration! It is usually the name of the Virgin, or a Saint, who expect nothing other than to “give us a hand” in life, to give us a hand to obtain the grace from God that we need. If the trials of life have not reached the breaking point, if we are still capable of persevering, if despite everything we proceed trustingly, more than due to our own merits, perhaps we owe all this to the intercession of all the saints, some who are in Heaven, others who are pilgrims like us on earth, who have protected and accompanied us, because all of us know there are holy people here on this earth, saintly men and women who live in holiness. They do not know it; neither do we know it. But there are saints, everyday saints, hidden saints, or as I like to say, “saints who live next door”, those who share their lives with us, who work with us and live a life of holiness.

as Saint Basil confirmed – “The Spirit is truly the dwelling of the saints since they offer themselves as a dwelling place for God and are called his temple” (On the Holy Spirit, 26, 62: PG 32, 184A; see CCC, 2684).

Peter Qualey (Cambridge “Our Lady of the Poor” fraternity, min.

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### **Ipswich ‘Blessed John Scotus’ Fraternity**

*We have continued to hold our monthly meetings on Zoom. Taking a break from our usual formation in December we decided it would be more appropriate to reflect on St Francis and Christmas – the Feast he loved above all others. Our reflection focused on Thomas of Celano’s description of how Francis celebrated Christmas at Greccio. In the spirit of this festive meeting, we sang carols led by Mary Pells on the piano and Chris playing the guitar. The musical accompaniment was of a high standard, Mary is an Examiner for*

*the Royal Schools of Music. Everyone thanked Chris for arranging this musical event, and agreed it was something we should do again in the future.*

*After paying our Capitation for 14 Professed Members, the Fraternity made 4 donations of £50 in December to: Ipswich FIND (Families in Need) Foodbank; Aid to the Church in Need; Arkley Poor Clares; and CAFOD Coronavirus Vaccinations in the Developing World. Treasurer Ann Gleave subsequently received acknowledgements from all beneficiaries, including a lovely letter from Sister Francisca.*

*For Ongoing Formation for the early part of 2021, we decided that we would use Pope Francis' Encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti'. As the Encyclical is a long document, members were encouraged to read a chapter or two prior to a meeting and share any points which they felt were of particular interest during meetings. To assist this, I emailed the relevant chapters with accompanying graphic sheets produced by the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Human Development to members each month. The Dicastery's resources on the Encyclical which can be accessed on its website: [www.humandevelopment.va/en/fratelli-tutti.html](http://www.humandevelopment.va/en/fratelli-tutti.html).*

*Edwin Edwards, our JPIC Minister, and Chris Housden, Regional JPIC Minister, played important roles in leading our reflections on 'Fratelli tutti'. We noted that in the opening paragraphs Pope Francis explains that St Francis' fraternal love, simplicity and joy which inspired him to write 'Laudato si', prompted him to write this new Encyclical on fraternity and social friendship. Then we reflected on Chapter One 'Dark Clouds Over A Closed World' in which Pope Francis draws attention to those parts of the human family, who it appears can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. He laments the lack of universal human rights resulting in millions of people today – children, women and men of all ages – who are deprived of freedom and forced to live in conditions akin to slavery. The Chapter ends on a positive note reminding us that God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family.*

*During our February Meeting we reflected on Chapter Two 'A Stranger on the Road', devoted to the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Pope Francis makes many challenging observations on how the vulnerable are often treated in developed societies today. He counsels "Let us look to the example of the Good Samaritan. Jesus' parable summons us to rediscover our vocation as*

*citizens of our respective nations and of the entire world, builders of a new social bond. We are called to direct society to the pursuit of the common good and, with this purpose in mind, to persevere in consolidating its political and social order, its fabric of relations, its human goals. By his actions, the Good Samaritan showed that the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders”.*

*We continued by reflecting on Chapter Three ‘Envisaging and Engendering An Open World’. In this Chapter Pope Francis challenges us to love with open hearts others. He makes penetrating observations “Every brother or sister in need, when abandoned or ignored by the society in which I live, becomes an existential foreigner, even though born in the same country. They may be citizens with full rights, yet they are treated like foreigners in their own country. Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting. I would like to mention some of those “hidden exiles” who are treated as foreign bodies in society. Many persons with disabilities feel that they exist without belonging and without participating. Much still prevents them from being fully enfranchised. Our concern should be not only to care for them but to ensure their “active participation in the civil and ecclesial community”.*

*At our March Meeting we reflected on Chapters four and five. The theme of Chapter four is ‘A Heart Open to the Whole World’. Pope Francis’ recent visit to Iraq demonstrates this in action. It was agreed that we had benefitted for many years from others coming to our country, such as priests from Africa and India, and those who work in the NHS, schools, agriculture, etc.*

*The theme of Chapter five is ‘A Better Kind of Politics’. In this Chapter Pope Francis calls for a new social and political order which recognizes that all human beings are brothers and sisters, with no one excluded. Members found of special interest, the sections on ‘Social and Political Charity’ and ‘The Exercise of Political Love’. It was agreed that the world would certainly be a much better place if Pope Francis’ way of doing politics was actually carried out. For instance, in paragraph 188, “Their biggest concern should not be about a drop in the polls, but about finding effective solutions to the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual*

*exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime”; and in paragraph 189, “We are still far from a globalization of the most basic of human rights. That is why world politics needs to make the effective elimination of hunger one of its foremost and imperative goals. Indeed, when financial speculation manipulates the price of food, treating it as just another commodity, millions of people suffer and die from hunger. At the same time, tons of food are thrown away. This constitutes a genuine scandal. Hunger is criminal; food is an inalienable right”.*

*On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March, the Fraternity had the great joy of celebrating the Rite of Admission for Lorcadia Nyoni at St Mary’s Church, Ipswich. Although meetings are not permitted at present under the Covid-19 restrictions, church services are allowed. Our Vice Minister Deacon Clive Brooks sought special permission for the short service to take place from Fr Peter Raj, during a Clergy Deanery Meeting. It was good to gather physically as a fraternity, if only briefly, which we had not been able to do for over a year!!*

*David Gleave ofs, Minister*

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### **Norwich “Pax et Bonum” Fraternity**

*We have continued our monthly meetings and Council meetings on Zoom, though sadly a couple of members do not have the facility to connect satisfactorily.*

*On the positive side, however, holding meetings via Zoom has meant we have had a couple of additional people join us. Simon Hambrook, who was professed in the Norwich Fraternity and now lives in Assisi, recently asked if he could join our meetings as he is still having some difficulty with the language in his local fraternity. We also welcome Giovanna Payne as a Visitor. She will be moving to the Bedford area soon and is eager to begin her enquiry into becoming a Secular Franciscan. As Bedford Fraternity are not meeting at present, she has been seconded to us as a temporary measure. We also have pleasure in welcoming Paula Pearce, previous National Minister, to our fraternity as she has now moved to live near Norwich. All are most welcome*

*and are great assets to our meetings.*

*We also have one member, who, after some soul-searching and with consent of the Order, has decided to take a two-year sabbatical.*

*Regarding activities, it has been decided that the uncertainty of the pandemic renders it rather difficult to make positive arrangements for any events to take place much before the end of the year. However, we have a group of volunteers from the fraternity who venture into the city centre on Wednesday evenings with soup, sandwiches, and friendship for the street dwellers when lockdown rules permit.*

*We continue to follow ‘In the Footsteps of St Francis’ for ongoing formation with professed members taking turns to prepare the material.*

*Active professed members currently number nine; in addition we have one Candidate undergoing formation (temporarily suspended because of lockdown), three Visitors of whom one is a ‘visiting’ Visitor, and our Zoom brother from Assisi.*

*Anne Murrin – Minister, Pax et Bonum March 2021*

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### **JIPC Report for East Anglian Magazine (Spring 2021)**

I would like to start with an email I received from Rob Hardie. Rob has highlighted that some churches have been involved in the Cafod **Live Simply Campaign**. Over the years he has tried to interest other Franciscans in EAR to run a Live Simply Campaign in their parishes. If you are interested in giving it a go, as Rob says, “...it’s all on the CAFOD website.”

Also I would like to welcome Lawrence Smith, from the Norwich Fraternity, who has agreed to become the JPIC Minister for the Norwich Fraternity.

### **Lest She Pollute the Sanctuary.**

Dr Patricia Rumsey (Abbess: Poor Clares, Arkley) has written a fascinating

book called “Lest She Pollute the Sanctuary.” (It is only recently that I have discovered that Dr Patricia is an associate professor at Nottingham University!) It is a study of the role of women in the church and the influence of the Gospel of James. This gospel was popular in the 2-3rd centuries and continues to have influence to the present day. It is Dr Patricia’s view that this text is a significant factor in the denial of presbyteral ordination to women in some churches.

She argues that the ordinary Mary of the gospels has, through the Gospel of James, turned into a miraculously ideal of womanhood unattainable by flesh and blood women. In the canonical gospels Mary is a peasant girl, in an unknown village, engaged to a local carpenter, generally a more down to earth Mary. In the Gospel of James, the young Mary is secluded as a child in the sacred precincts of the Temple, hidden from anything which would contaminate her other-worldly purity. According to this gospel, at 12, the priests decided to marry Mary off to an aged Joseph, “lest She pollute the Sanctuary”.

A key point Dr Patricia makes in her book is that there are four key liturgical feasts in the church that are dependent on the Gospel of James, rather than the New Testament. These are:- The Feast of Joachim and Anna, the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity of Mary and her Presentation in the Temple.

You can find on **You Tube** the book launch, which occurred on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021. One of the speakers was Fr Nick King, SJ, who speaks authoritatively on male misogyny in the church. He states the church will not be credible in our culture unless it changes its attitudes to women in four key areas. Vocabulary, ministry, liturgy and authority.

I would recommend you buy the book. However it retails at about £62.00 if you can find a copy. (Amazon are out of stock). I have based the above on an article in The Tablet, the You Tube Book launch and limited access to some pages of the book on the internet. Hopefully the book will become more

available and come down in price. The message, however, is an important one.

### **Nuclear Weapons**

The following is taken from an article on Nuclear Weapons which appeared in a recent National Justice and Peace Network ebulletin.

#### ***UK NUCLEAR STOCKPILE TO INCREASE BY MORE THAN 40%***

**Christian CND writes...***The publication of the Integrated Review of Defence and Security Policy has confirmed that the UK's nuclear warhead stockpile will increase to 260 by the middle of the decade, ending over 30 years of gradually declining stockpile numbers.*

*The UK currently has around 180 nuclear warheads, stored in Coulport in Scotland when not deployed on submarines, with each one around eight times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The number of warheads the UK holds has been decreasing since its peak of around 500 at the end of the Cold War. The last Strategic Defence and Security Review, which was published in 2015, suggested that the number of stockpiled warheads would be capped at 180 by the mid 2020s and no more than 120 should be operational.*

I'm sure all reading the above will share my concerns as to the direction our government is going in terms of defence policy. As a small step I have joined Pax Christi, a charity devoted to promoting peace between nations. I have taken out a monthly direct debit to cover the membership fee which I will hardly notice as it will be around the price of a Big Issue!

#### **Asylum rights for the majority of refugees arriving in Britain**

**The Government's new plans to reform the asylum system end the asylum rights for the majority of refugees arriving in Britain and included no new safe routes to sanctuary. As a result thousands have signed a letter to Priti Patel. Here are some excerpts: -**

**To: Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department**

March 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to your announcement of the New Plan for Immigration. Every refugee should be met with compassion and protection regardless of the journey they take here to the UK, and what they need most now are new routes to sanctuary. Unless changed, the proposals you have set out will make the lives of many who've fled war and persecution a misery.....

We are asking you to urgently make changes now to deliver on the safe routes you promised.

First, **offer child refugees quick and easy ways to reunite with family in the UK**, with ambitious reforms to family reunification rules. All families should be together, but the proposals suggest that you are considering making it harder for families to reunite. The existing rules on family reunion already keep too many families apart, and this needs to change.

Second, **establish a new scheme to relocate child refugees in Europe and offer them sanctuary in the UK**, including those without family links here. Having fled war and persecution, there are children right now stuck on the streets of Calais or in refugee camps on Greek islands – nobody can call that safe for children. We have a moral duty to help them.....

Yours sincerely,

Safe Passage

**Climate/Environment - Global Healing with Laudato Si**

The Global Catholic Climate Movement have been producing Talks for Lent, which have been excellent. if you haven't managed to watch any of them so far, they are all available to watch on [YouTube](#).

**Call for Nature's Recovery by 2030**

Wild Justice are calling for a change to the Environment Bill to strengthen the law. It would require the UK Government to set a legally binding target to

reverse the loss of nature in England by 2030. Over 50 nature conservation groups have joined together to urge the Prime Minister to make sure this crucial change gets through.

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Dear Reader,

Please consider sending something of interest to be published in the Autumn 2021 edition of this magazine. It could be from an Enquirer, or Candidate preparing from Profession, on what attracted you to the Secular Franciscan Order. If you have recently celebrated 25 years or more in the Order, do tell us how membership in a fraternity has helped your spiritual pilgrimage of life.

Whilst reading scripture, has anything in particular caught your attention and perhaps even changed your life. Or have you heard a homily that really challenged you?

Have you written any poetry lately that you would like to share with others?

For entry into the Autumn 2021 magazine, please send your offering to:

[michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com](mailto:michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com)

Or get someone else to send it if you do not have access to a computer

To save me hours of work and frustration, PLEASE send your copy

**In WORD, A5 size, Colibri font. Thank you, brothers and sisters.**

## ON EAGLES' WINGS(?)

This is an account of getting to (and returning from) New Zealand (it is as far as one can go on Planet Earth without coming back again) in a National Lock Down to attend our son Tim's wedding, when at any moment both our plans and his and his fiancée's could have been easily scuppered by either government on either side of the world, not to mention the activity of the dreaded COVID-19 virus.

I hope that you will find these memories and reflections en route interesting. If not, then I take absolutely no offence if you instantly find something more interesting to feast your eyes upon.

Many thought we were quite mad even to consider travelling, and many of them considered me especially fit for 'sectioning' (under Section 3 of the Mental Health Act) as I decided unequivocally to attend come 'Hell and High Water'. Clare is a little more pragmatic, but we both decided to 'go with it' until we came to a brick wall too high to scale.

The first brick wall was a Critical Purpose Visitor's Visa for me (Clare is a 'national' so has no need to apply for visas etc). I applied to Immigration NZ (INZ), a simple on-line form, and paid the two-figure fee. Almost by return (impressed!) I was told I had been granted permission to apply!! This second application (I had just applied to apply with the first form) was almost impossible to complete and took days of work with the need to attach numerous scanned documents including our wedding certificate and a letter from the priest in New Zealand marrying the happy couple. After all was completed, the on-line form refused to process the fee (who's side was it on?) which was now a three-figure number! Many buttons were pressed on our computer and fears we had then paid twice (fortunately not but I am developing a great suspicion to all things electronic - they are not friendly to the old and decrepit) but eventually all was well.

The 'Happy Couple', I felt, were more than worthy of whatever inconveniences came our way and of our intended attendance as they had (unfashionably) not co-habited and once engaged decided on a date as near in the NZ future (almost the same as ours bar 13 hours) as possible. They

settled for January 23rd, again come 'Hell or High Water' (there must be a gene for determination).

The bride's name is Mariam, which is Our Lady's name in Aramaic (and probably was what she was called) - the ancient tongue from which both Hebrew and Arabic are derived. Her family had moved from Iraq with her when she was a little girl in the 90s and they belong to the Chaldean Christian tradition of the Catholic Church. The Chaldean Church goes right back to the first century AD when one of St Thomas' disciples, St Addai, took the Good News to what had been the Babylonian Empire. Middle Eastern people still have a wonderfully strong family and religious culture. It is so delightful, and we in the West could do well to remind our sons and daughters of its beauty as they persist in 'maturing' out of their Catholic cradles.

The proper visa arrived by email at 8 am on my 73rd birthday on 12 November! That was great encouragement to keep going! This allowed us to book a fortnight with INZ to be quarantined in one of the 'Managed Isolation and Quarantine' (MIQ) units (these were requisitioned hotels) in New Zealand. No dates were available pre-Christmas (we were booking in November) but some slots were free in early January. A window of only 48 hours is given after provisional booking to book and confirm the flights! Pressure! We went for tickets with Cathay Pacific as they were the cheapest with extra legroom etc (both the flight and I have long legs!).

All looked good (TBTG\*) and detailed wedding arrangements preceded at a distance of 13,000 miles (it is customary in Iraqi weddings for the groom's parents to host!!!!!! Actually, it's very Biblical). The beloved bride's parents and the couple themselves modified the established customs and we all footed the bill! (TBTG again\*).

Then came the threat of a Christmas Lock Down here with the UK admitting to having a new 'Kent' strain of the COV2 virus (COV2 is the virus that causes COVID-19, D for Disease) and the onset of world-wide panic.

Saturday 19 December. Cathay re-scheduled our Hong Kong to Auckland flight. Our Barclay Card has been tampered with by someone booking a hotel in Japan so is immediately cancelled!! The same day Boris (like Dr Seuss' Grinch) cancels Christmas and imposes Tier 4 Restrictions on London and Surrey (where we have to deposit Holly the dog with Brother and Sister-in-Law).

Sunday 20 December. Europe and Israel close their borders to the UK, and UK hits the highest COVID figures ever of 30,000 new cases a day. The Evening Office that day was PS 112 "He has no fear of evil news, with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord." (I'm glad I jotted this down in the proverbial journal!)

Monday 21 December. It's the shortest day. In the shortest possible time all our plans are scuppered by the Chinese authorities (who don't like the UK much) cancelling all flights from UK to HK until the 10th January! With two weeks in forced quarantine we would now miss the wedding! I write in my journal "Praise the Lord in and for all things whether they are to our liking or not" (and take my feelings out on the old Hayter mower I'm servicing in the garage). Clare has an inspiration while I continue to work out my feelings, that we should just see if any other airlines, like Singapore Airlines, are still flying from Heathrow to NZ. They are!!! But our Barclaycard is out of action as we wait for another to be sent, and we cannot pay! We FaceTime our son who looks glum. We say, "Don't worry we are working on it" (now with 33,000 new cases a day should we really be travelling?!).

Tuesday 22 December. Clare sees that Singapore Airlines are not taking bookings! She still tries to reactivate our card without success, and I idly press buttons on my laptop (like "Heathrow, Auckland") and Hey Presto! Up comes

a hitherto unknown site to us called Sky Club with a large, emblazoned phone number on the website. It's like an oasis in a desert - I can *ring* someone in the ways that we did in the Old World we once lived in - and within minutes have a return booking with Emirates! It's the only airline likely to still be flying on New Year's Eve when we had originally arranged to go (we still needed to arrive on the same day to tie in with the MIQ unit in Auckland). Phew!

The days over Christmas pass rather slowly in a less than festive way, under the gloom that the severe Tier 4 restrictions imposed on the whole of the East of England. Despite our new tickets we feel our chances of succeeding in our mission dwindling. COVID cases are rising alarmingly: 40,000 on 28 December, 53,000 on 29th. Everywhere we read that all international travel apart from business is banned! There is one shining star on the ascendant.



This is celebrating our  
'Wedding Anniversary in Lock  
Up'.

[Continued on page 29>>>>>]

## SISTER FRANCIS BENEDICT'S CARDS

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*(all original designs)*

In an effort to simplify our price list, we have decided to sell *all* our cards at 75p each (this includes postage).

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Please tick box below designs you wish to order and fill in number of each one required.



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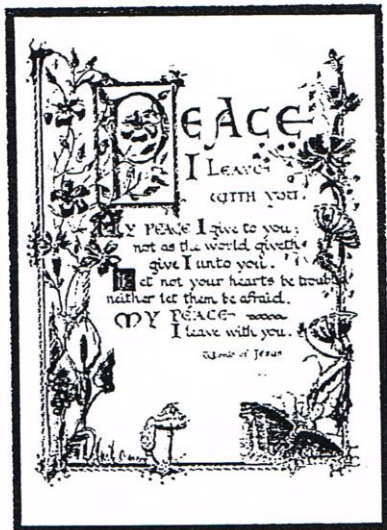
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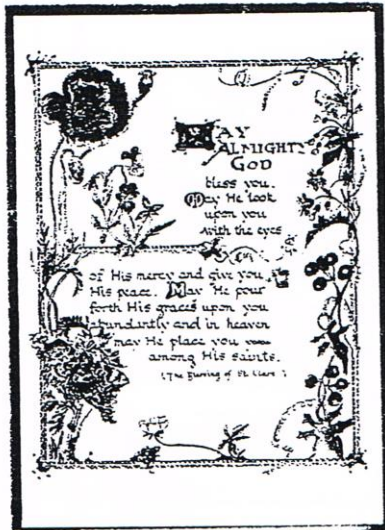
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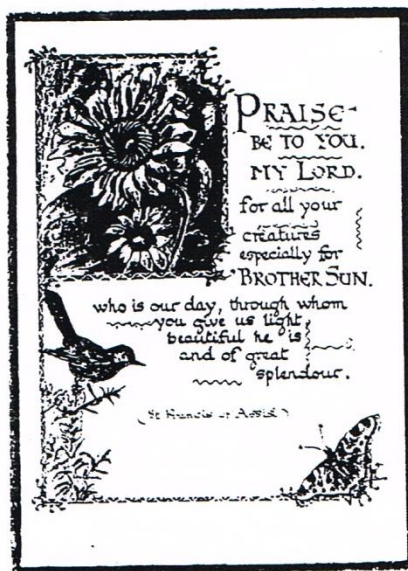
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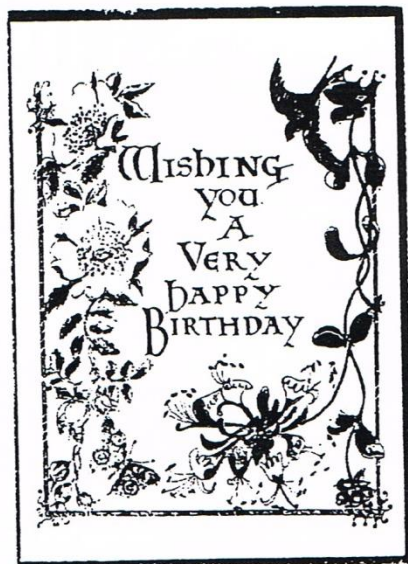
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Clare playing Ten Pin Bowling with surplus water bottles (so many were delivered to us - we drank them all over the following four weeks of freedom) and a loo roll to roll. Guess how many bottles were knocked over by her flying loo roll?



This is the view from our 10th story window. Quite amazingly and unexplainably the air conditioning in our previous room packed up and we started to bake. The exemplary duty manager gave us the room opposite with such a great view!! The previous room just looked onto the rear of the hotel and the back of some office blocks - fine for watching other inmates exercise on a flat roof 5 floors below but there was little else to catch one's eye. TBTG\* we thought again.



And maybe just a photo of Tim and Mariam being crowned King and Queen as per Chaldean Wedding Tradition. There was a lot of 'ululating' going on too! The dictionary says ululating is a 'howl of grief' but here it was a howl of love and approval. They say they are actually singing "Alleluia".

In my 'Journal' on 27 January I write, "This

It wasn't quite all heavenly when it came to our return flight!!!

Dear Boris was busy with his inner circle changing Red Zones so we soon found ourselves without a 'second leg' back from Dubai as all flights to UK from Dubai had been cancelled! What a wonderful thought: stay in Heaven a bit longer! Stay in Heaven for good!!!!??

But we all have responsibilities: our car was parked outside in the ice and snow on the drive of Clare's brother; and our dog, Holly, was inside his house being looked after by his family. Our house was empty, and the garden birds were being fed by our neighbours. On the other hand, our daughter had been over and requisitioned our desk top computer for our grandson to do his on-line schooling at home and wasn't too keen to return it! We contacted the

amazing travel agents once more and are rebooked via Dubai and Frankfurt. We breathe again (perhaps a little sadly!). But only for a brief moment as Boris and Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, decide to introduce quarantine hotels on the day we are booked to arrive back in Heathrow! Auckland Lock Up was quite fun (playing Ten Pin Bowling) and when we came out it was to total freedom, but a quarantine hotel in London for 10 days at £1750 each didn't really appeal?! The family in UK said, "Don't worry, they (hotels for quarantine) won't be up and running for ages". But they were!! The amazing travel agents again came up trumps and brought us back via Dublin a day earlier - with the added bonus that flights to and from Ireland have a special passport arrangement and it took us only 20 minutes from sitting on the Airbus 320 to being outside Terminal 2!!

So, what do we make of all this? How did we get to NZ and back so easily? Do Christians (and Franciscans especially) have a charmed existence where everything works out like good fairy tales?

I will try not to sound too wise and too holy, but I am sure (as was Julian of Norwich) that Goodness and Love are always at the centre of everything. Tim and Mariam's wedding seemed to be such a special occasion full of both Goodness and Love that it seems to spill out in all directions. Could it have permeated all levels of existence (time, distance etc) to affect everything connected to the wedding (including us)? Goodness after all begets goodness. If Heaven is portrayed as a wedding feast maybe all the Goodness and Love from there comes cascading eternally out all over the whole of Creation. Even in this world Our Lady feels deeply for anything that might hinder the celebration of an occasion so full of love (John 2:5).

But what about the times when Goodness and Love don't hold sway, when things don't go well, and we are overwhelmed by badness, sadness, and woe? What about the difficulties the Western World is now under and the grief that has been inflicted by COVID-19? Compared to the normality and freedom of New Zealand it all seems rather dark and gloomy now we are back in the Northern Hemisphere with all its problems (it didn't help that there it was summer and here an English winter!). Being an island NZ was able to close its borders early, and with a small population (5 million) it set up an excellent track and trace system. It was so fantastic to walk and talk and socialise NORMALLY! Everyone is missing just being a normal human being here.

I believe Julian has something great to say to help us on this too. Sheila Upjohn has written several books on Mother Julian. There is a particularly good one for Lent called *The Way of Julian of Norwich, a Prayer Journey through Lent*. She quotes from Julian's *A Revelation of Divine Love* pointing out that our difficulties, failures, pain and even sin (confessed) are precious to the Lord for "He looks on sin as sorrow and anguish to those who love Him, and because He loves them, does not blame them for it." And "as we have been punished here with sorrow and penance, we shall be rewarded in Heaven with the courteous love of our Lord God Almighty." Rewarded for our sin!!!!????? But it is sin that is confessed. What a relief, it's OK sometimes to sin, I don't have to be perfect. Sometimes I find the Franciscan call too lofty, too unattainable, Francis set the bar extremely high (imagine asking to be tugged through the streets by a rope for having eaten a small piece of chicken!). It's easy to feel a Franciscan failure (and a double failure to admit it!). I could, however, never cope without the Franciscan upside down world view. And what an example Francis was even if I am unable to copy him exactly.

However, it is certainly not wise to sin, as there is always so much pain associated with it! The Lord tells us to be perfect (to avoid pain?) like our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:48). So, I will try to be perfect but not be too upset or neurotic if I find I'm not! This is so much in line with the whole

message of Mercy Pope Francis has persistently preached during his pontificate (it is the message of the Gospel). I heard a Lenten talk given by John Armitage recently in which he expounded on our journey from “Misery to Mercy to Magnificat”! It’s all ultimately to God’s greater glory and praise! He is worthy of ALL praise.

This gives me GREAT HOPE. God’s rewards for our pain are greater even than for those heavenly wedding moments we were so blessed to experience! “Jesus Christ came into this world save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15), says St Paul, and then he follows it up by saying “I myself am the greatest of them.”

The wedding was lovely and its blessings manifold, and we appreciated them so very much (TBTG\*); but earthly wedding days sadly do not go on for ever, especially when they are in the opposite side of the world, but real life does go on, even in the Pandemic! I will keep ‘reading Julian’ (as well as my perfect Franciscan material).

\*TBTG = Thanks be to God

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### **THE YEAR OF ST JOSEPH**

Extracts from Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter *‘Patris Corde: On the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church’*.

Pope Francis has proclaimed a “Year of St Joseph” from 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

WITH A FATHER’S HEART: that is how Joseph loved Jesus, whom all four Gospels refer to as “the son of Joseph”. Matthew and Luke, the two Evangelists who speak most of Joseph, tell us very little, yet enough for us to appreciate what sort of father he was, and the mission entrusted to him by God’s providence.

We know that Joseph was a lowly carpenter, betrothed to Mary. He was a “just man”, ever ready to carry out God’s will as revealed to him in the Law and through four dreams. After a long and tiring journey from Nazareth to

Bethlehem, he beheld the birth of the Messiah in a stable, since “there was no place for them” elsewhere. He witnessed the adoration of the shepherds and the Magi, who represented respectively the people of Israel and the pagan peoples.

After Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than Joseph, her spouse. My Predecessors reflected on the message contained in the limited information handed down by the Gospels in order to appreciate more fully his central role in the history of salvation. Blessed Pius IX declared him “Patron of the Catholic Church”, Venerable Pius XII proposed him as “Patron of Workers” and Saint John Paul II as “Guardian of the Redeemer”. Saint Joseph is universally invoked as the “patron of a happy death”.

Now, one hundred and fifty years after his proclamation as Patron of the Catholic Church by Blessed Pius IX (8 December 1870), I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience. For, as Jesus says, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”. My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how “our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone... How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all”. Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble.

Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

### **An obedient father**

Joseph was deeply troubled by Mary's mysterious pregnancy. He did not want to "expose her to public disgrace", so he decided to "dismiss her quietly" .

In the first dream, an angel helps him resolve his grave dilemma: "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins". Joseph's response was immediate: "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him". Obedience made it possible for him to surmount his difficulties and spare Mary.

In the second dream, the angel tells Joseph: "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him". Joseph did not hesitate to obey, regardless of the hardship involved: "He got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod".

In Egypt, Joseph awaited with patient trust the angel's notice that he could safely return home. In a third dream, the angel told him that those who sought to kill the child were dead and ordered him to rise, take the child and his mother, and return to the land of Israel. Once again, Joseph promptly obeyed. "He got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel".

During the return journey, "when Joseph heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream" – now for the fourth time – "he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth" .

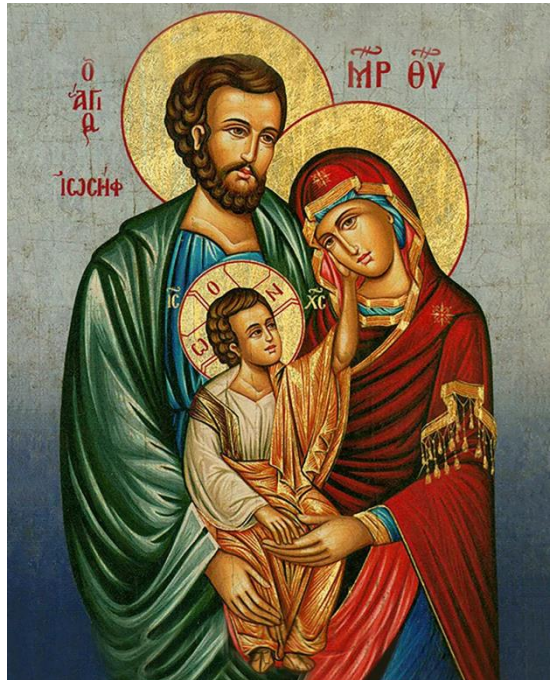
The evangelist Luke, for his part, tells us that Joseph undertook the long and difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered in his

family's town of origin in the census of the Emperor Caesar Augustus. There Jesus was born and his birth, like that of every other child, was recorded in the registry of the Empire. Saint Luke is especially concerned to tell us that Jesus' parents observed all the prescriptions of the Law: the rites of the circumcision of Jesus, the purification of Mary after childbirth, the offering of the firstborn to God.

All this makes it clear that "Saint Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood" and that in this way, "he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation."

### **An accepting father**

Joseph accepted Mary unconditionally. He trusted in the angel's words. "The nobility of Joseph's heart is such that what he learned from the law he made dependent on charity. Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man. Even though he does not understand the bigger picture, he makes a decision to protect Mary's good name, her dignity and her life. In his hesitation about how best to act, God helped him by enlightening his judgment".



Often in life, things happen whose meaning we do not understand. Our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion. Joseph set

aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history. Unless we are reconciled with our own history, we will be unable to take a single step forward, for we will always remain hostage to our expectations and the disappointments that follow.

The spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that explains, but accepts. Only as a result of this acceptance, this reconciliation, can we begin to glimpse a broader history, a deeper meaning.

Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive. In our own lives, acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.

Jesus' appearance in our midst is a gift from the Father, which makes it possible for each of us to be reconciled to the flesh of our own history, even when we fail to understand it completely. Nor should we ever think that believing means finding facile and comforting solutions. The faith Christ taught us is what we see in Saint Joseph. He did not look for shortcuts, but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.

Joseph's attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak. He is the "Father of orphans and protector of widows", who commands us to love the stranger in our midst. I like to think that it was from Saint Joseph that Jesus drew inspiration for the parable of the prodigal son and the merciful father.

### **A creatively courageous father**

As we read the infancy narratives, we may often wonder why God did not act in a more direct and clear way. Yet God acts through events and people. Joseph was the man chosen by God to guide the beginnings of the history of redemption. He was the true "miracle" by which God saves the child and his mother. God acted by trusting in Joseph's creative courage. Arriving in Bethlehem and finding no lodging where Mary could give birth, Joseph took

a stable and, as best he could, turned it into a welcoming home for the Son of God come into the world. Faced with imminent danger from Herod, who wanted to kill the child, Joseph was warned once again in a dream to protect the child, and rose in the middle of the night to prepare the flight into Egypt.

A superficial reading of these stories can often give the impression that the world is at the mercy of the strong and mighty, but the “good news” of the Gospel consists in showing that, for all the arrogance and violence of worldly powers, God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan. So too, our lives may at times seem to be at the mercy of the powerful, but the Gospel shows us what counts. God always finds a way to save us, provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.

The Gospel does not tell us how long Mary, Joseph and the child remained in Egypt. Yet they certainly needed to eat, to find a home and employment. It does not take much imagination to fill in those details. The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I consider Saint Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty. At the end of every account in which Joseph plays a role, the Gospel tells us that he gets up, takes the child and his mother, and does what God commanded him. Indeed, Jesus and Mary his Mother are the most precious treasure of our faith.

In the divine plan of salvation, the Son is inseparable from his Mother, from Mary, who “advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son until she stood at the cross”.

We should always consider whether we ourselves are protecting Jesus and Mary, for they are also mysteriously entrusted to our own responsibility, care and safekeeping. The Son of the Almighty came into our world in a state of great vulnerability. He needed to be defended, protected, cared for and raised by Joseph. God trusted Joseph, as did Mary, who found in him someone who would not only save her life, but would always provide for her

and her child. In this sense, Saint Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history, even as Mary's motherhood is reflected in the motherhood of the Church. In his continued protection of the Church, Joseph continues to protect the child and his mother, and we too, by our love for the Church, continue to love the child and his mother.

That child would go on to say: "As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me". Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is "the child" whom Joseph continues to protect. For this reason, Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying. Consequently, the Church cannot fail to show a special love for the least of our brothers and sisters, for Jesus showed a particular concern for them and personally identified with them. From Saint Joseph, we must learn that same care and responsibility. We must learn to love the child and his mother, to love the sacraments and charity, to love the Church and the poor.

### **A working father**

An aspect of Saint Joseph that has been emphasized from the time of the first social Encyclical, Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, is his relation to work. Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour. In our own day, when employment has once more become a burning social issue, and unemployment at times reaches record levels even in nations that for decades have enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron.

Work is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion. It becomes an opportunity for the fulfilment not only of oneself, but also of

that primary cell of society which is the family. A family without work is particularly vulnerable to difficulties, tensions, estrangement and even break-up. How can we speak of human dignity without working to ensure that everyone is able to earn a decent living?

Working persons, whatever their job may be, are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us. The crisis of our time, which is economic, social, cultural and spiritual, can serve as a summons for all of us to rediscover the value, the importance and necessity of work for bringing about a new “normal” from which no one is excluded. Saint Joseph’s work reminds us that God himself, in becoming man, did not disdain work. The loss of employment that affects so many of our brothers and sisters, and has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, should serve as a summons to review our priorities. Let us implore Saint Joseph the Worker to help us find ways to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!

### **A father in the shadows**

Fathers are not born, but made. A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child. Whenever a man accepts responsibility for the life of another, in some way he becomes a father to that person.

Joseph found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift. In him, we never see frustration but only trust. His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust. Our world today needs fathers. It has no use for tyrants who would domineer others as a means of compensating for their own needs. It rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction. Every true vocation is born of the gift of oneself, which is the fruit of mature sacrifice. The priesthood and consecrated life likewise require this kind of maturity. Whatever our vocation, whether to marriage, celibacy or virginity, our gift of self will not come to fulfilment if it stops at sacrifice; were that the case, instead of becoming a sign of the beauty and joy of love, the gift of self would risk being an expression of unhappiness, sadness and frustration.

In every exercise of our fatherhood, we should always keep in mind that it has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a “sign” pointing to a greater fatherhood. In a way, we are all like Joseph: a shadow of the heavenly Father, who “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust”. And a shadow that follows his Son.

The aim of this Apostolic Letter is to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal. Let us now make our prayer to him:

**Hail, Guardian of the  
Redeemer, Spouse of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary. To you  
God entrusted his only Son; in  
you Mary placed her trust;  
with you Christ became man.**

**Blessed Joseph, to us too,  
show yourself a father, and  
guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy and  
courage, and defend us from  
every evil. Amen.**

**Prayer from the Apostolic  
Letter of Pope Francis**

Given in Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on 8<sup>th</sup> December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 2020, the eighth of my Pontificate. *Franciscus*

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## REV. GEORGE HERBERT

In response to the invitation to EAR OFS members to submit a favourite poem to be included in our magazine my thoughts immediately turned to George Herbert. I particularly like poetry that has rhyme and rhythm to it, and I love George Herbert's gentle, humble, prayerful and introspective approach; this can be expressed as a dialogue with God, or a confession of sorrow for sin with always the promise of forgiveness. Writing in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, before Puritanism and the English Civil War, and an ordained minister of the Church of England, his poetry is focused on Jesus, on His death on the Cross for our redemption, and despite our unworthiness, carries throughout the hope and heartfelt longing of reliance on the goodness and love of God.

So in ['The Call'](#) Jesus is indeed our way, truth, life, light, feast, strength, joy and love, where heart meets Heart:

*Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:  
Such a Way, as gives us breath:  
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:  
And such a Life, as killeth death.*

*Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:  
Such a Light, as shows a feast:  
Such a Feast, as mends in length:  
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.*

*Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:  
Such a Joy, as none can move:  
Such a Love, as none can part:  
Such a Heart, as joys in love.*

[Many a hymn collection will include:](#)  
*King of Glorie, King of Peace, I will love thee:*

*And that love may never cease, I will move thee.  
Thou hast granted my request, Thou hast heard me:  
Thou didst note my working breast, Thou hast spar'd me.*

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Familiar too may be 'Love':

*Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back, guiltie of dust and sinne.  
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack, from my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning, if I lack'd any thing.*

*A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here: Love said, you shall be he.  
I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare, I cannot look on thee.  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply, who made the eyes but I?*

*Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame go where it doth deserve.  
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame? My deare, then I will  
serve.*

*You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat: so I did sit and eat.*

And truly there are other lovely poems written by George Herbert.

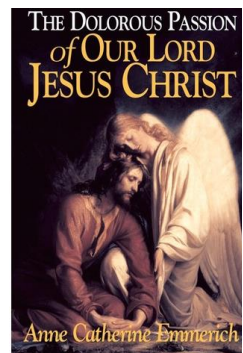
[Chris Whittam OFS]

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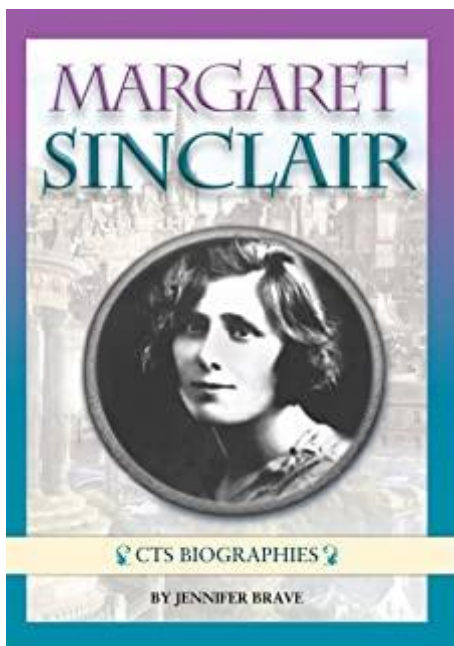
*Most of you readers are likely to  
have a favourite poem. Please  
share it with others, explaining  
why you love the verse so much  
and perhaps how it helps you  
through a difficult patch!*

*You may even have a picture that  
accompanies it. Don't be shy -  
please send it to me:*

[michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com](mailto:michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com)



Cover for book  
reviewed on p.51



## **CTS Biographic Series**

### **Margaret Sinclair**

Author Jennifer Brave

Date 2001

ISBN 1 86082 122 7

Website

[www.cts-online.org.uk](http://www.cts-online.org.uk)

Those of us who have visited the Poor Clares at Arkley would have been struck by the Shrine to Margaret Sinclair in the Sister's church. When I first visited in 2007, I was very struck by the Shrine and I bought a number of items related to Margaret.

Those wanting an introduction to the Venerable Margaret Sinclair need look no further than this excellent CTS pamphlet written by Jennifer Brave. (Jennifer has also contributed to the CTS booklet, The Gospel of Matthew.) The pamphlet is 27 pages long and includes prayers at the end as well a short list of Sources and Acknowledgments.

Margaret Sinclair was born on 29 March 1900, in a run-down Edinburgh tenement. She was the third of six children. The family was poor and her parents struggled to make ends meet, her father being a hardworking dustman. As a young person Margaret was always giving-helping her mother and father, her brothers and sisters, friends and neighbours- and also quietly she was giving to God.

For nine years Margaret worked and she was to experience first hand what it felt like to be made redundant and be out of work. She started with the Waverley Cabinet Works and ended with McVitie and Price; she worked in six different factories in the space of nine years. Working conditions in factories and works at this time were poor and in one of the places she worked, Margaret became an active Trade Union member, caring for her fellow workers.

Margaret Sinclair's last two years of life were to be served as an extern sister in the Order of the Poor Clare Colettines. She travelled south to London and entered the Poor Clare Convent at Notting Hill on 23 July, 1923. On 11 February 1924 Margaret was "clothed" receiving both the brown habit of her order and her name, Sister Mary Francis of the Five Wounds. Sr. Mary Francis loved her convent-so much so that she feared, at times, that her love for it might be excessive! The pamphlet contains further information on Sr. Mary Francis' time as a Poor Clare.

Before her Profession on 14 February, 1925, Sr. Mary Francis had been suffering from a sore throat. This quickly worsened and the doctor diagnosed tuberculosis of the throat and she was moved to a sanatorium at Warley. Sr. Mary Francis never spoke of how ill or exhausted she must have felt, wanting nothing but to do God's will.

Sr. Mary Francis was to spend the next seven months at Warley, radiating joy and serenity in the face of increasing bouts of pain, breathlessness, and vicious coughing and choking spasms. Her coughing was so bad that she had to be moved six times to avoid disturbing the other patients.

At 4.45am on Tuesday 24 November, Sr Mary Francis left this world, her smile remaining in death. It was not long before cures and favours attributed to Margaret's intercession poured in from all over the world. In 1978 Pope Pius XII declared Margaret Venerable. In 1987 Fr Stephen McGrath, OFM., was appointed Vice-Postulator of Margaret's cause. In January 2015 Archbishop Leo Cushley relaunches the campaign to beatify Venerable Margaret and appoints Fr Joseph McAuley of the Archdiocese of Glasgow to be his Episcopal Delegate for the Promotion Of the cause of Venerable Margaret Sinclair. Her body now rests in St Patrick's church, Cowgate, Edinburgh where she used to

attend Mass as a young person. (The Sinclair family furniture is housed in a room behind the choir loft in St Patrick's Church).

### **The Cheerful Giver - Margaret Sinclair**

Another excellent book on Margaret Sinclair is "The Cheerful Giver" by Felicity O'Brien. This is 93 pages long but is very easy to read. It finishes with a selected Biography and some thoughts from Margaret such as the following:-

"Don't worry about anything. Just put your trust in God and everything will be all right in time."

"To bring the sun into the lives of others, it is necessary to keep it always alight in ourselves."

"There are no bad days."



St Paul Publications - The  
Cheerful Giver:- Margaret  
Sinclair.

Author Felicity O'Brien.

Date 1991

ISBN 0 949080 28 4

[Chris Housden ofs, Ipswich *Blessed John Duns Scotus Fraternity*] -0-0-0-

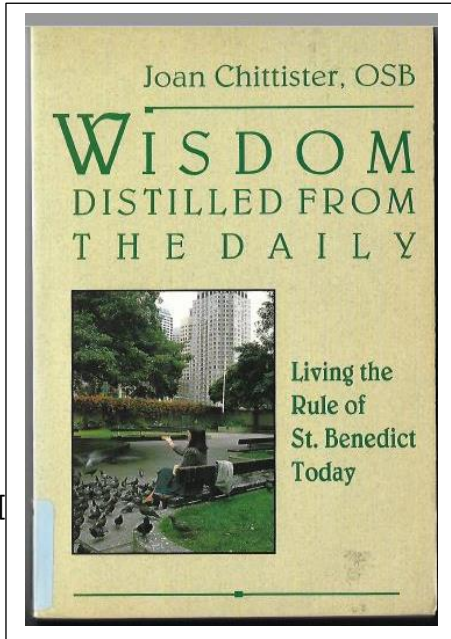


Helena 978-0-140-18243-9 **Evelyn Waugh's Helena** After reading an article about Evelyn Waugh and his novels, including the one titled 'Helena', I thought I must read it. The novel had the author's personal recommendation since of all his books, it was the one he liked most and even read as a story to his children. I was intrigued by a supposed connection of Helena with Colchester. In fact the story begins with the kingdom of Coel and his household at Colchester, in Roman Britain, where Helena grew up and where she met

Constantius her husband who was an important liaison officer on a routine tour of the province. The early life of Helena in her father's household, her love of horse-riding and her studies under her tutor Marcias are happily described.

As the story develops the young Helena goes away with her husband to more southerly parts of the Roman Empire and fits into the role of a soldier's wife. Her son is named Constantine who is destined to be one of the Roman Emperors (306-337) and sole Emperor from 324. He was the first Emperor to convert to Christianity. The novel entertains in a charming way with details of Roman life and times and leads on to Helena's journey to the Holy Land in search of the True Cross for which she is mainly remembered. I was fascinated by the story with its background of 4th century Rome and with Helena's travels to the Holy Land and searches and with the help of local bishop Macarius, to collect many relics from the time of Jesus.

After I had recommended and lent my book to a friend I was somewhat taken aback when he pointed out to me that it was now well established that Helena had been born in Turkey rather than Colchester!



I was struck by the words 'the Rule of St Benedict is designed for ordinary people who live ordinary lives. It was not written for priests or mystics or hermits or ascetics; it was written by a layman for laymen.....'

As a lay Franciscan I had picked up from my reading how the Church had wanted to steer St Francis towards the Benedictine form of life rather than approve a new Rule and was also aware how over many years the Franciscans had split into different branches and had become more used to settled religious houses.

[Bro. Edwin Edwards, Ipswich *Blessed John Duns Scotus Fraternity*]

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[ISBN not shown]



A book suggestion, though I have to admit I haven't yet read a copy but definitely mean to. It is called 'The Interior Silence – 10 Lessons from Monastic Life' by Sarah Sands, who you may or may not know as a past editor of Radio 4's Today programme. She lives in Norfolk and has the remnants of an old monastic wall bordering the foot of her garden that inspired her during the pandemic to write this book. During her very busy life she has travelled extensively, meeting many famous people as a result of her work, but she has also visited - each for a day only - monasteries throughout the world, 10 of which she refers to in her book,

in order to explore how to be silent and encounter the Divine. The book has been reviewed during the last week, both in the EDP and The Saturday Times (and likely other publications). I quote part of a review from the Rev Marcus Walker, Rector of Gt St Bartholomew in London:

“The pace is swift and the telling light, as names are dropped and anecdotes recounted that, because of who she is, somehow don’t sound ridiculous or affected – even when they involve Boris Johnson chasing a wolf called Boris around an oligarch’s castle near Assisi.”

Suffering from information overload, unable to sleep, Sarah Sands, former editor of the BBC's *Today* programme, has tried many different strategies to de-stress... only to reject them because, as she says, all too often they threaten to become an exercise in self-absorption.

Inspired by the ruins of an ancient Cistercian abbey at the bottom of her Norfolk garden, she begins to research the lives of the monks who once resided there, and realises how much we may have to learn from monasticism.

Renouncing the world, monks and nuns have acquired a hidden knowledge of how to live: they labour, they learn and they acquire 'the interior silence'. This book is a quest for that hidden knowledge - a pilgrimage to ten monasteries round the world.

From a Coptic desert community in Egypt to a retreat in the Japanese mountains, we follow Sands as she identifies the common characteristics of monastic life and the wisdoms to be learned from them; and as she discovers, behind the cloistered walls, a clarity of mind and an unexpected capacity for solitude which enable her, after years of insomnia, to experience that elusive, dreamless sleep. **[Notes from the Amazon**

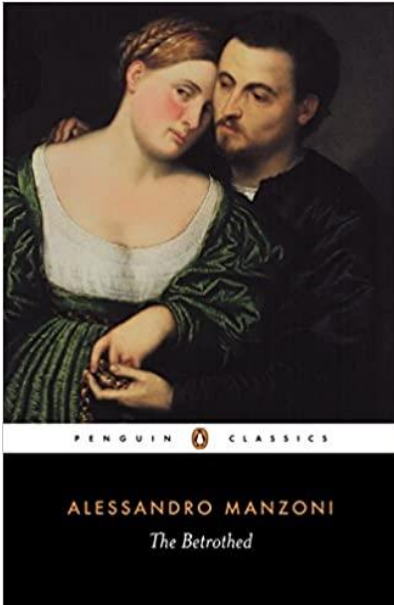
**website, from which the book may be bought – hardback only**

**[4 New from £11.80](#) and [kindle:£7.99.](#)]**

Please send future copy to me [michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com](mailto:michaelsimmonds36@virginmedia.com)

**A5 size, Colibri font** . I sometimes have great trouble converting size from A4 to A5 and changing the font to fit the rest of the magazine. Thanks! Ed.

## THE BETROTHED by Alessandro Manzoni



Pope Francis loves this great Italian Classic and has read it many times. He even quoted it during his Easter Vigil homily last year. I must admit I had never heard of it, but I was intrigued. What was so special about it? Having brought a copy I found it difficult to put it down.

Set in Lombardy during the Spanish occupation of the late 1620s, it is a story of two young lovers, Renzo and Lucia, who are prevented from marrying by the tyrant Don Rodrigo who desires Lucia. Their parish priest the nervous Don Abbondio is threatened with death if he marries them.

Forced to flee their village Renzo and Lucia are separated and face many dangers. They are helped by Father Cristoforo, a Capuchin Friar, a champion of the oppressed with an unusual past. Manzoni brings a range of other colourful characters to life, including the sinister 'Unnamed' and the pastorally compassionate Cardinal Federico Borromeo, making many shrewd observations on human nature. It is a wonderful historical novel of love, tyranny, and faith, with plenty of humour, which takes many unexpected turns of events set against a background of famine, war, and plague.

It is a great novel on many different levels – contextually with descriptions of the Italian countryside and historical background; delightful pen-pictures of the main characters with their strengths and weaknesses; vivid details of various groups – peasants, nobility, clergy, braves, famine and plague victims, mercenaries, officials; and descriptions of the prevailing social conditions. Lively dialogue and banter between characters. Astute asides made by the author. Great story lines and running throughout a profoundly religious theme. On purpose I have not given too much away!!

I highly recommend the Penguin Classic fluent easy to read translation by Bruce Penman (720 pages). It is widely available from booksellers, but is priced £10.57, with free postage, from the Book Depository [www.bookdepository.com](http://www.bookdepository.com).

David Gleave of, Ipswich 'Blessed John Duns Scotus' Fraternity

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**The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ by Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich [Stigmatist] 1774-1824**

I reviewed this book in the Spring 2020 edition of this magazine. This is a sequel review of this very special book. In fact, I have found it SO special that since March 1995 I have meditated on all of the Passion of Christ that was available to me at the time, but which did not include the Last Supper. When I became aware that Blessed Anne Catherine's visions of the Last Supper were included in an edition of the visions, published in 1983, available in the USA, I asked our Sr. Cynthia Savory of our fraternity, who was going to visit her daughter [my God-daughter] in America, to buy me a copy which included the Last Supper, and what a revelation it is!

The Last Supper and preparation for it and a detailed description of the layout of the building and its owner, are included. We are given intimate details of the Supper, the institution of the Blessed Sacrament and the washing of feet, as well as the origin and description of the chalice used, which makes me feel as if I am reading a news report by someone who was present at the Supper!

After the Supper, going to Gethsemane and the Garden of Olives, the descriptions not only of Christ's physical sufferings but also his temptations and foreknowledge, not only of the details of his pending passion but also the problems the Church would have for centuries.

The Gospels cover much of the betrayal of Judas and the arrest of Jesus, but Blessed Anne Catherine describes what happened to Jesus overnight, from his illegal "trial", his being dragged mercilessly before the prevaricating Pilate,

then dragged roughly to Herod and the appalling treatment he received from Herod's men and his rough, hurried journey back to Pilate, both Herod and Pilate declaring Him INNOCENT!

We all know what happened then and Jesus was scourged [terrible details from an eye-witness], mockingly crowned with thorns, forced to bear his Cross [our cross] which was y-shaped, with Simon of Cyrene's help [vivid descriptions] and the arrival at Calvary.

The appalling details of the Crucifixion bring the whole scene alive and because the nail holes for the hands and feet were pre-drilled in the wrong places, when one hand had been nailed, Jesus was stretched as on a rack, across to the other nail-hole which was too far across, so "disjointed are all my bones"[psalm 21/22:15] or "they have numbered all my bones." His arms must have been pulled out of their sockets! This stretching pulled his body up so that the hole for the feet was also too far away, so then his whole sacred body was stretched down with rope until his feet were in the right place for the extra long nail to go through both feet. His legs must have been pulled out of their sockets. And his Mother was witness to all this!

The hours of darkness came and Anne Catherine was taken up into space and shown the movements of the planets and she says you get a much better view from up there.[Amazing, as Anne's life spanned part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century] She describes one of the planets with rings round it! It sounds like a description from a spacecraft!

After the death of our Saviour, Christ's activity in Limbo/Hell. The earthquake, damaged Temple [torn veil], spirits from their graves roaming the streets. The Resurrection, Christ ordaining and instructing the apostles and the Ascension. This is my "every Lent" reading, bit-by-bit each day of Lent. I cannot recommend this book enough. For me it is like a supplement to the Bible – it is NOT GOSPEL, but enlightening and helpful to meditate on Christ's Passion.[Amazon: About £13.00 Tan Books ] ISBN 0-89555-210-8]Several different versions. Insist it includes The Last Supper. Used copy on ebay?