

# Franciscan Angles

A Newsletter of Anglican Franciscans in Aotearoa New Zealand

2011 - 1

## Christopher John Awarded Masters' Degree in Franciscan Studies



*Reginald, Christopher John, Phillipe Yates ofm, Colin Wilfred and Austin at Canterbury.*

For a long time I'd been wanting to learn more about Francis and things Franciscan. After a number of years in community I realised I hadn't got much beyond a few Sunday School stories and needed some form of organised study to give me a better understanding of what it means to be inspired by the poor man of Assisi. A break in the UK in 1999 gave me the opportunity to taste an introduction to Franciscan studies at the Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury. A few years later the Centre introduced an MA in Franciscan

studies into its courses. It seemed impossible to find a year away, not to mention the funding, to do that course. But by then SSF had established a friary in Canterbury so accommodation was no problem. By taking the course part time – one term a year – I was able to manage the time away, and with some generous scholarship funding from various places I was able to afford the course fees and airfares.

I started in September 2006 with the first term of study, and finished in August 2010

writing a dissertation on Anglican Franciscan history. The papers I took included Franciscan hagiography (studying the stories about Francis written and compiled during and shortly after his life); Franciscan Christology (how Franciscan theology understands and talks about Christ); Franciscan philosophy and theology of creation; the writings of Francis; and Franciscans in the contemporary world. With those out of the way I was able to head on to writing a dissertation about the beginnings of the Anglican Franciscan revival in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. I looked at the question of how some of the early Anglican Franciscan founders and their communities understood what it meant to be Franciscan and how their different visions merged to form the Society of St Francis. To do this I needed to use a number of the documents and other publications in various archives and libraries in the U.K.

Could I have done all that sitting at the friary and reading a few books? I doubt it. Apart from the access to material which we don't have in this neck of the woods, the great value of the course was being in an environment with

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**Changes to Franciscan Angles — see page 6**

## Then and now

If spirituality is the word to describe one's relationship with God - then it is bound to vary from one person to another, even though there may be much in common between people of a similar age. What is written here is therefore a personal account of life with God, here and now, as a priest and Franciscan brother in my mid-eighties. The titles of two books, as well as their content, by the French Jesuit, de Causade, which I read in my student days around 1950 have made a lasting impression on me throughout my adult life. They are "Abandonment to Divine Providence" and "Sacrament of the Present Moment". The former helped me to discover a vocation to the religious life, and the latter taught me to discern the revelation of God's will in the events, circumstances, wisdom and words of some other people with whom I have conversed.

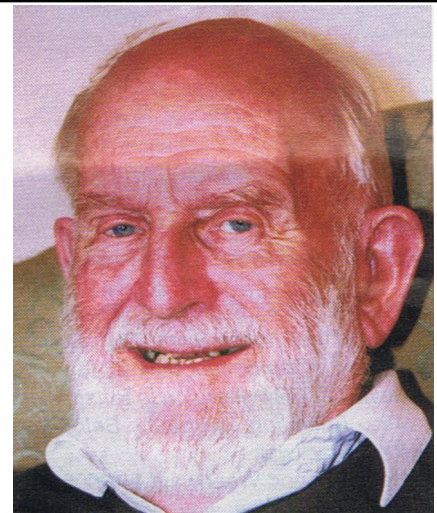
In old age one is often tempted to go down memory lane recalling what one thinks were the good old days. Often they were, but not always. There were the experiences of worship and prayer, of life in community, of mission and ministry, when God seemed to inspire one to some worthy achievements for the Kingdom's sake. Yet there have also been times of apparent failure when God seemed to be far away or giving one a rough time. With hindsight I can look back and realise how we, as a community, could have made wiser decisions and achieved better results. Yet the past can never be repeated even though we glibly say that history repeats itself. If we have repented of the manifestations of selfishness, self-centeredness, self-pity and self-importance we are forgiven. There is no need to spend old

age wallowing in guilt.

Rather, thankfulness and contentment are two features in old age which claim the heart - thankfulness for the people who through the years have taught and inspired us; for the people in whose lives we have been entwined; for the generosity and kindness of others; for the companionship of other members of the Society of St Francis, even for the irritating ones.

It is sometimes said that many people mellow in temperament as they get older. They are having to learn to live one day at a time which perhaps we should have done all through life instead of being too concerned about the future, which we may have been in the earlier decades, because of a constant desire to be a success. By accepting life as it is now we can be content with who we are in the presence of God. If in the past we have been more concerned with doing and achieving, now we are more concerned with being - with being the children of God made in his image, with being people who have always been loved by God who is love. We learn to appreciate others, especially in the community, who like us have been created in his image and likeness, redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ and continually in-dwelt by the Spirit.

For a Franciscan brother in old age there can be the temptation to compare the present negatively with the past. He can be resistant to change. Much of what he says may be true. But if his opinions are formed and expressed by the cynicism of the heart, then his younger hearers will not want to hear about the past - his cynicism



*Br Brian ssf*

will make him too boring. But if he has accepted gracefully the changes of the present then it is likely that his occasional accounts of the past will be found interesting and helpful.

Franciscanism must be maintained by each generation as a living tradition and not meaningless antiquity. Brothers of all ages need to be surrendered to Divine Providence, accepting the will of God in the present moment. Just as life in the world and the church has changed in recent years, so the religious life is changing, the Society of St Francis is changing "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health". Yet the fundamentals remain the same. Living in humility, love and joy under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, sisters and brothers, young and old, witness to the unchanging gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.

Change for the sake of change is meaningless and damaging, but change to enable us to live the Christ-life in accordance with the will of God in the present age may be welcome and necessary. Sensitivity and generosity, particularly towards the old, must be expressed by those

responsible for initiating change.

For some, in younger years the transcendence of God is predominant. Worship, whether it is the splendour of the solemn Eucharist. The rendering of psalms, canticles and anthems at a cathedral Evensong, or the appreciation of art, architecture and orchestral music or the beauty of the landscape, uplifts the soul to God who is beyond, so to speak. But as the years proceed, the immanence of God assumes greater importance in the prayer life of many individuals and groups. There is the desire to be with God in silence, stillness and solitude, knowing that God is in us and with us. Gradually a method of contemplative prayer is discovered and practised day by day. The practice of the Presence of God takes on greater importance in the life of the pray-er.

Contemplative prayer is not a substitute for liturgical prayer. They are complementary. In all Christian prayer Christ, the heavenly intercessor, prays in and with his Mystical Body. Prayer is not so much what we do but what Christ does through us and within us. So the elderly have a continuing ministry for the church and the world by their prayer in Christ. The daily office, participation in the Eucharist, whenever possible, are still important and valuable. Supporting our prayer is the devotional reading and reflection of Scripture; for in

the scriptures as in the sacraments we meet Christ. In the latter years there maybe more time and a greater desire for unhurried prolonged Bible reading. Many, too, may have their favourite spiritual author to whom they turn frequently. The present writer is sustained by an anthology of the writings of Father Richard Meux Benson SSJE entitled "Look to Glory". Through this reading and prayer there can come a greater appreciation of the simplicity of God and the simplicity of Christian discipleship.

The loss of some physical and mental powers can be humiliating. We are no longer called upon to do the sort of things we used to do, even when we think we are still able. Instead, we see those of a younger generation taking over. We can either be critical and judgemental or encouraging and grateful. Far better to be the latter if we are to pass from this world in peace and joy.

*Brother Brian SSF lives at the friary in Hamilton, New Zealand.*

*This article first appeared in Franciscan Vol 23 No 3 Sept 2011*

## Christopher John Studies

*(Continued from page 1)*

teachers and learners also exploring these questions of what it is to be a Franciscan in the twenty-first century. This was not only at the Franciscan Study Centre itself but down the hill at the SSF friary in central Canterbury. And if inspiration was lacking, then just outside the friary was the Greyfriars gardens with its historic building, the one remnant of the medieval Franciscan foundation in Canterbury, and a short walk away was Canterbury Cathedral.

The other SSF brothers in Canterbury were good support too. Two of them (Reginald and the late Colin Wilfred) had both lived in NZ and so we had many conversations along the lines of "Whatever happened to so-and-so ...?" Probably rather annoyingly to the other brothers (Austin and Kevin) who had no idea what we were talking about!

I am very grateful to all who made this study possible: the European Province and particularly the Canterbury brothers for their hospitality, those who assisted with funding, and the brothers in Korea for sparing me for quite long periods each year.

One of the benefits from this course is that I've put together a collection of workshop/retreat programmes called "Francis and Clare for Today" which I offer to NZ parishes and schools. Another thing is that I'm now able to go on to do a PhD in peace studies at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University. My plan is to study contemporary Franciscan peacemaking with the aim of helping Franciscans be more effective peacemakers. I'll keep you posted with news on that. So – am I a kiwi who's flown back to Aotearoa? Not entirely yet – my base is now Stroud in New South Wales – but study and other engagements in NZ give me significant periods of time back here and I'm loving the chance to re-connect.

*Christopher John SSF*



# Brother Colin Wilfred SSF - Obituaries

## Obituary from the three archbishops of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Dear Friends,

We learned today of the death of Brother Colin Wilfred of the Society of St Francis, at the friary of Canterbury, England. Brother Colin was in his early 70s and had been unwell for a time. This is indeed sad news for the church because Brother Colin served amongst us here when the friars were living in Auckland. During his time in Aotearoa New Zealand, Brother Colin conducted many retreats, gave many bible studies and talks and contributed widely from his considerable theological and spiritual resources. Brother Colin was instrumental in creating the Anglican Religious Life Advisory Group of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia for the Anglican Church of these islands. Although Brother Colin left for England some years ago he will be remembered with much aroha, for his passion for justice and peace as well as his intelligent and creative witness to contemporary Christian spirituality, not forgetting his wonderful wit. This record of service by a friar amongst us underscores again the incalculable value of Franciscan witness and Franciscan vocation for us and with us.

E te pononga o Te Atua, haere, haere, haere, moe mai i roto i te rangimarie o Te Karaiti  
Well done thou good and faithful servant.

*Archbishop Brown Turei  
Archbishop David Moxon  
Archbishop Winston Halapua*



## Obituary from Martin Pendergast – particularly concerning Colin's AIDS ministry in London in the 1980s and early 1990s

Brother Colin Wilfred of the Anglican Society of St Francis died at their friary in Canterbury on 2 August 2011. Brother Colin was in his early 70s and had been unwell for a time, although active in many ways. More recently he was Guardian of the friary next to the medieval Greyfriars.

He was well known to many Roman Catholics, not least for his pioneering work in showing how Christian communities could live positively with HIV/AIDS. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, both government and faith communities in London were faced with the reality of HIV, then an incurable and usually quickly fatal disease. There was growing statistical and anecdotal evidence that London was home to the largest concentration of people with or affected with HIV. A number of individuals (both lay and ordained) from within the Christian communities were actively involved with providing different kinds of both practical and pastoral support to people with or affected by HIV. They were aware of the climate of fear, prejudice and ignorance

which adversely affected people with or affected by HIV and interfered with a proper understanding of and response to the this illness.

Issues of sexuality, and theology made the response to HIV both one in which they believed the churches should take a lead, but also which caused confusion and sometimes judgement within their communities. They originally came together for mutual support and to discuss how these problems might be handled effectively in a number of ad hoc groups, such as the inter faith group of Terrence Higgins Trust, the Ministers' Group (an informal meeting of clergy and others involved with people with HIV and AIDS started in 1986), and London Christian Action on AIDS. These included Revd. Andrew Henderson, Sr. Eva Heymann SHCJ, Revd. Malcolm Johnson, Fr. Bill Kirkpatrick, Charles O'Byrne, Martin Pendergast, and the late Fr. David Randall.

Over time, all of these groups ceased to meet, although there was a general consensus that there was a need to continue meeting, but a shortage of resources to plan and organise meetings. The London Churches HIV/AIDS Unit, accountable to the London Churches Group of ecumenical church leaders, was established in September 1990, and in 1991 it presented a briefing paper detailing the view of its steering group and its Adviser, Bro. Colin Wilfred, that the London Ecumenical AIDS Forum should be established, bringing together representatives of groups, hospital chaplains, those appointed by denominations to work on this issue, and others within the Christian and Jewish communities in order to offer support, to share information and to identify needs and avoid duplication, as well as attend to the spiritual aspects of HIV

<http://www.aco.org/acns/digest/index.cfm/2011/8/3/Brother-Colin-Wilfred-dies-in-UK>  
<http://anglicantaonga.org.nz/News/Common-Life/Brother-Colin-Wilfred-dies-in-UK>

need.

One of the first World AIDS Day liturgies was held at St. George's Roman Catholic Cathedral Southwark when Colin's flair as a liturgist combined with his commitment to people with HIV. With the then Canon John Hine, now Catholic auxiliary Bishop in Kent, Colin Wilfred co-presided at a joint Liturgy of the Word, followed by separate Anglican and Roman Catholic celebrations of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, probably the first of its kind in a UK Roman Catholic Cathedral. He and I worked together on a number of further World AIDS Day liturgies to be held in Southwark Anglican Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and other London churches of various denominations.

In 1991 Colin Wilfred had moved to St Botolph's Anglican Church Aldgate, to be the first full time Anglican counsellor for people affected by HIV. He had already been a member of the Ministers' Group. Colin later moved to the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in 1993 where a small SSF community was formed.

Colin memorably devised the dignified Exodus Liturgy marking LGCM's formal eviction from St Botolph's Church in September 1988 at the orders of the Diocese of London and its Consistory Court. It was a rare assignment for anyone and he produced a reflectively creative and rousing finale for LGCM's sojourn at that church, with a passionate evocation of the terrors of discrimination and stigmatisation, all set within the framework of the Hebraic-Christian story which brought out his skills as an imaginative, challenging liturgist alongside his passion for justice.

He continued to develop his liturgical expertise, co-compiling many of the editions of the Daily Office SSF. The original influenced *Celebrating Common Prayer* which

influenced the Daily Office in *Common Worship* (CofE).

Colin Wilfred was later elected Minister Provincial of SSF in Australia and New Zealand. Responding to news of his death, the archbishops of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia said: "This is indeed sad news for the church because Brother Colin served amongst us here when the friars were living in Auckland. During his time in Aotearoa New Zealand, Brother Colin conducted many retreats, gave many bible studies and talks and contributed widely from his considerable theological and spiritual resources. Brother Colin was instrumental in creating the Anglican Religious Life Advisory Group of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia for the Anglican Church of these islands. Although Brother Colin left for England some years ago he will be remembered with much aroha, for his passion for justice and peace as well as his intelligent and creative witness to contemporary Christian spirituality, not forgetting his wonderful wit. This record of service by a friar amongst us underscores again the incalculable value of Franciscan witness and Franciscan vocation for us and with us. 'E te pononga o Te Atua, haere, haere, haere, moe mai i roto i te rangimarie o Te Karaiti. Well done thou good and faithful servant.'"

In 2009 he contributed to an ecumenical day on spirituality, sponsored by Carmel-in-the-City, at St. Joseph's Church, Bunhill Row, London.

His funeral will take place at St. Peter's Church, Canterbury, on the Feast of St. Clare, 11 August, at 13.00.

*Martin Pendergast*

### **Obituary written for Church Times**

Brother Colin Wilfred, who died in the Canterbury friary at Eastgate Hospital on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup>. August was a much loved brother of the SSF who lived joyfully, and who bore the last years with an irreversible condition of the lungs as a true friar and Christian man. Did he welcome Sister Death? At any rate, he never complained and persevered in ministry within and without the Society until Sister Death could no longer be denied. He travelled to meetings on public transport through last winter, and was present at our Annual Brothers' Chapter in June.

Colin Cherriman was born 5<sup>th</sup>. September, 1937 at Chaldon. He attended Reigate Grammar School, and went on to qualify as a librarian. He was a member of St Mary's Church, East Grinstead, adjacent to the Convent of St Margaret, was later accepted for ordination and attended Leeds University and the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield. He was ordained deacon to a title at St Francis', Bournemouth in 1965, and priest the following year. His vicar was the late Alan Harrison.

On the 5<sup>th</sup>. July, 1969 at the age of 31 he entered the Society of Saint Francis as a postulant, was clothed as a novice three months later and was professed in vows on 10<sup>th</sup>. June, 1972. For the next 24 years he served in the European Province in various capacities - novice tutor at Hilfield, then Plaistow - in charge of the friary at Harbledown, Canterbury - in Belfast and in Edinburgh - back to Hilfield, then in 1982 he became Guardian for five years of the Alnmouth Friary. Like all good teachers, he was a good learner and through these years he grew as a missionary, a retreat conductor, a spiritual director, a liturgist. He was never at a loss for words!

*(Continued on page 6)*

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Over the years there was also growing in Colin a passion for justice in society and in the churches for people of all sexual orientations – so, when in the mid eighties AIDS made its devastating appearance among us, he became active in the cause of ministry to sufferers, both practical and pastoral. In 1987 he was released from Alnmouth so that he could move to London where he worked from various bases (Camberwell, Paddington, The Royal Foundation of St Katharine with Brother Jude) – as HIV/AIDS Pastor for the East End at St Botolph's Aldgate. From Brother Jude 'He stayed with people until they died, washing their bedding when they had no one to care for them; sometimes in the early days of the epidemic when there was much fear, he laid out people because undertakers refused to do the job. In one week he conducted 14 funerals. By 1996, he was burnt out'.

And, in 1996, came the call to the Australia/New Zealand Province, of which he was elected Minister in 1997. The three archbishops of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Polynesia send this tribute:- '..... During his time in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Brother Colin conducted many retreats, gave many bible studies and talks and contributed widely from his considerable theological and spiritual resources. He was instrumental in creating the Anglican Religious Life Advisory Group of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Polynesia for the Anglican Church of these islands.....His will be remembered with much aroha, for his passion for justice and peace as well as his intelligent and creative witness to contemporary Christian spirituality, not forgetting his wonderful wit'. And, from Australia, Brother Bruce-Paul writes:- 'I lived with Colin at Stroud from 2001-3. He was a

great gift to us all even if it wasn't easy to get a word in sideways sometimes. I give thanks to God for his friendship, his liturgical and preaching gifts and the gentleness of his pastoral ministry one to one.'

In 2003 he returned to the European Province, and has since lived at the Canterbury friary. With Sister Joyce he worked untiringly on the revision of 'The Daily Office SSF' whose undoubted success he lived to see, served on the Editorial Board of *Franciscan*, Provincial Chapter, and the group which planned the Annual Brothers' Chapter 2011, and continued to carry out preaching engagements.

All who mourn him give thanks for a wonderful and loving brother who came bearing gifts selflessly shared, and departs with our prayers for his rest and bliss.

*Anselm ssf*

## **Bruce-Paul's PhD Studies**

We have just received news that Bruce-Paul's doctoral thesis has been accepted and that he will graduate Doctor of Philosophy from Charles Sturt University.

Well done Bruce-Paul!

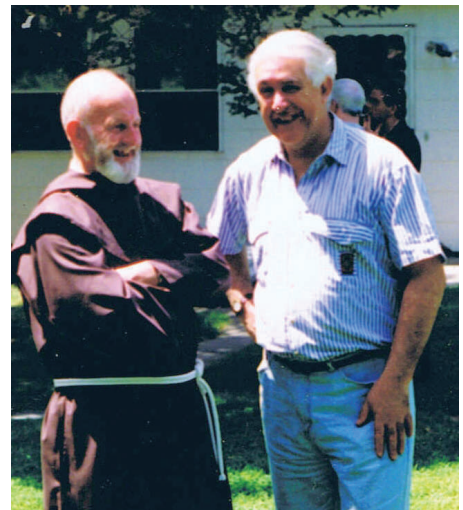
*More details will follow later.*

## **Bishop Sir Paul Reeves RIP**

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of Bishop Sir Paul Reeves on 14th August 2011.

Bishop Paul was a long time friend and supporter of the friars both in Auckland and throughout the world. He was our Deputy Bishop Protector from 1981 until he became Governor General in 1985. During his term in the vice-regal office he frequently visited the friary in Parnell, often to preside at the morning Eucharist.

We extend our love and prayers to Beverley and to the family.



*Br Brian and Bishop Paul at Little Portion Friary, Long Island, USA*



## **Changes to Franciscan Angles**

For a variety of reasons we are making some necessary changes to the way we share our news.

- ◆ We will be posting items of news to our website [<http://www.franciscan.org.nz>] more frequently, with the intention of being more up to date.
- ◆ We will continue to mail a printed copy to those people who do not use the internet, usually once or twice a year. Unfortunately the cost of printing, and postage has increased.
- ◆ If you can receive an email copy please let us know.



# Is God Calling You To Be A Franciscan Friar ?

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The Society of Saint Francis is a religious order in the Anglican Communion. It is involved in the contemporary world, seeking to promote unity and reconciliation and in caring for the marginalised. The Society is committed to the spiritual search in the Christian tradition and seeks to follow the way of St Francis of Assisi in humility, love and joy.



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(once a year is plenty thanks!)*

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## Intercessions

Please pray with us ...

### Thanksgivings

Bart's Life Profession  
Christopher John's MA  
Bruce-Paul's PhD

### Intercessions

Nathan-James preparation for  
ordination to the Diaconate  
Christopher John's beginning at  
Otago University

### Brothers

Alfred Boonkong  
Bart  
Brian  
Bruce-Paul  
Christopher John  
Cyril  
Damian Kenneth  
Daniel  
Donald Campbell  
James Andrew  
Lawrence  
Lionel  
Nathan-James  
Noel-Thomas  
Raphael Suh  
Simone  
Stephen  
William

### R.I.P.

Colin Wilfred ssf  
Bishop Sir Paul Reeves AHC  
David Dunningham  
Gwen Te Haara

## Religious Life Advisory Group



The Religious Life Advisory Group met at Te Ara Hou Village over the weekend 5th/6th November 2011, convened by Bishop George Connor AHC.

Bishop Connor led the opening reflection based upon the Psalms which augured well for discussion throughout the group meetings.

*Back Row, Revd Peter Stuart,  
Carole Harford TSSF, Bishop George  
Connor AHC, Revd Helene Young TSSF,  
Mrs Valarie Langley  
Archbishop's Chaplain,  
Front row, Mrs Phillipa Young Urban  
Vision Community, Mthr Kolene CSN,  
Br Brian SSF, Sr Anne SLG.  
November 2011*



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Society of Saint Francis  
PO Box 13-117  
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