

Franciscan Angles

A Newsletter of Anglican Franciscans in Aotearoa New Zealand

2014 - 1

Provincial Chapter Meets at Hamilton Friary



Left to right, Dean Peter Rickman, Amanda Bradley, Raphael Suh, Clarke Berge, Bishop Helen-Ann, James Andrew, Daniel, Carole Harford TSSF, Christopher John, Dorothy Busfield, Damian Kenneth, Bet Raisher, Phil Dyer TSSF, Brian.

The Provincial Chapter met at the Friary of the Divine Compassion over ANZAC weekend this year. Brothers came from all corners of the province, and some joined by Skype. On the Sunday afternoon, Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley, the Bishop of Waikato, presided at a Eucharist for the Provincial Chapter. The photo followed afternoon tea.

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Holy Week 2014

The Parish of Christchurch St Michael and All Angels was delighted to welcome the Brothers from Stroud to preach and minister among us during our Holy Week and Easter liturgies. Brother Bruce-Paul and Brother Alfred arrived prior to Palm Sunday and Brother Christopher John arrived on Maundy Thursday in time to preach on Good Friday. During the whole period we celebrated morning and evening prayer and Mass daily. The brothers enriched us with their preaching and their prayerful presence as we developed a community of prayer over these days. This was my first Easter at St Michael's as Vicar and I appreciated the encouragement wisdom that the brothers brought among us as well as the pastoral care they offered in the parish. St Michael's is a central city

church in Christchurch and the brothers gained an understanding of the challenges the city faces. Daily we dodged road works as we drove in and out to the church and all around St Michael's demolition and ground preparation works go on.

Brother Alfred had a special connection to St Michael's, having been part of the parish for about 7 years when he was a student at Lincoln College. It was good that he could help take communion to Fr Philip Baker who had been the Vicar in those days, during Holy Week. As well as ministry within the parish Brother Bruce-Paul took part in a diocesan evening for vocations with Bishop Victoria Matthews and all the Brothers visited the Sisters of the Community of the Sacred Name.

Andrew Starky



Alfred BoonKong, Mother Kelene, Sister Elena, Christopher John and Bruce-Paul on a visit to the Community of the Sacred Name.

A Stressful Few Months

The last six months or so have been somewhat stressful, for our community here in Hamilton.

Brian had a fall in the friary which took him to hospital with a broken elbow. This required some reconstruction over a number of weeks, together with a brace on his arm, leaving him incapacitated and needing help in showering and dressing from a carer who called daily. While he was going through all this Damian suffered from a hernia which required surgery. That started out all well, but after a couple of days back home he developed an infection and was readmitted to hospital where the process of cleaning the wound and combating the infection took several weeks and a number of surgical procedures. The healing process back at the friary involved the constant care of the District Nurses for which we are most grateful.

We were exceedingly fortunate to have Phil Dyer tssf living with us and a huge burden fell on his shoulders. We were grateful when brothers Christopher John, Alfred BoonKong and Simone from Stroud were able to come and give practical support, nursing and domestic chores, and providing necessary transport for the invalids to and from the various medical appointments. Many thanks for that help from our brothers.

The whole process has been one of long, slow, gentle progress and both Brian and Damian are now much better and back taking their place in the communal life.

The Sermon Preached at Br Cyril's Profession

Br Christopher John

Today Brother Cyril makes his profession of vows. Obviously this is a special day for him and in the life of our community. But what does it mean to make a profession of vows? There are several things it is not. He's not getting promotion to a higher level in a job. Although a professed brother has greater responsibilities it doesn't mean any greater status or higher position. And he's not getting an increase in salary because none of us gets a salary!

Another thing he's not doing is joining a club or taking up an interesting hobby or sport. These are free time activities which we start or stop depending on our interest, but our life is a full time commitment.

To be a friar is to be committed to a way of life. It's not a job. It's not a hobby. It's a commitment which we express through the making of solemn promises, the profession of vows.

To "profess" vows is to become a "professional" - a person who practices a profession. In the middle ages the first recognised profession was divinity, and then medicine and law. These all require study and the mastery of particular knowledge and skills. They are all directed towards helping others through a life which is devoted not just to performing the tasks of divinity (or law or medicine) but through a life which actually becomes one with the profession. For example, a doctor is more than just

someone who "does medical things". A doctor is someone who embodies the caring and therapeutic skills of that profession.

So – what is a Franciscan friar? We can see the things which friars do – they pray, they perform liturgical functions, they live in community, they welcome guests, they provide counsel and direction, they cook and clean, and so on. But this doesn't define it.

Rather, it's the vows which give shape to our lives. We are people who are inspired by the example of Francis of Assisi and the way he lived the gospel. We're not trying to copy him, but we try to let his inspiration work through us in the lives we live. The shape of our lives is made by the vows we make.

Do we make religious vows because this is something difficult or because we think it will make God pleased with us? Of course not. Do we think this is something special and ascetic? No.

The reason we make religious promises is because God promises to be with us. The idea running through all scripture is that God calls his people, and promises to be with them – to the end of time. God is a god of covenant. Holy Scripture is the story of the covenant which God made with his people – the covenants made

through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David – and then the covenant made through Jesus Christ. Our God is a god of promises, and so we make promises to be faithful in following, serving and believing.

The most important vows which all Christians make are the vows made at baptism. In baptism we vow to reject sin and to follow and obey Christ in our life and worship.

That is the context in which Cyril makes religious vows today. He will accept the three-fold vows which we call the evangelical counsels. These are different from the vows a Benedictine monk makes. A monk vows stability, conversion of life and obedience. But the mission of Franciscan friars is to serve God in the world. We promise poverty, chastity and obedience. These are vows which set us free to serve Christ through the commitment to evangelical life.

A vow of poverty. Not because money or property or material things are bad. But we take this vow because to be dominated by money is wrong. The search for ever more and more money or property is destructive because it distorts our values. In the original words from the Rule written by St Francis this vow is one of living "sine proprio". Those Latin words mean "without possession", "without taking something for oneself", "without clinging to things." It's not just about living simply, but being generous. Being generous with time and talents.

A vow of chastity. Not because the desire for marriage or for

having children is wrong. This desire is a very good thing. But it's a vow which places a value on "singleness", on being "alone with God". There's so much in our world which speaks against being single. A lot of advertising and popular culture is for ever carrying the message that you need to be living in a sexual relationship in order to be fulfilled. But there's also so much in our religious tradition (and many other religions as well) which recognises that some people are called to be committed to this life of celibate chastity. It's a sign of God's kingdom, a sign of a life oriented around different values. It brings difficulty but it also brings great joy. And – when we know this joy – then we are to be generous to share that joy with others.

A vow of obedience. This is not a vow of following orders like a machine, or a private in the army. It's a vow of listening to God's call. We

hear God's call as we pray and read the scriptures and Franciscan sources. We hear God's call as we listen to each other in community. It comes as we listen to the decisions made by our community chapters and leaders. We live in a world where many people are shouting out "me, me, me". It seems each person wants to create their own world with themselves at the centre. Obedience is our way of saying, "we want God at the centre."

So are these vows something taken selfishly? Are they a way of avoiding the challenges of living in this world? Are they something taken for personal advantage and gain? I would say very much that the answer to all of these is no. Religious vows are not selfish. They very much place us in the middle of the challenges of this world. And there is no personal advantage or gain in them. Vows are taken for the sake of God's kingdom.

They are to call us to lives of kingdom values. We are to be people devoted to the search for justice and peace. We take vows so that we can recognise and name God's presence in all of creation. The vows challenge us to be people of good news. Put very simply our mission is to be people who show in word and action that God is good, that God is love, and that God wills all people and whole of creation to know this goodness and love.

Cyril. May God bless you as you make this commitment. May you be strengthened to seek out and share the good news of God's kingdom of love and goodness. May all the brothers give witness to this good news through their life together. May God give all of you the grace to be faithful sons of St Francis, inspired by him to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Amen.



(from left to right) Stephen SSF, Lawrence SSF, Catherine SHC (obscured), Cyril SSF, Lucy Edward SHC, Jemma CSF, Raphael Suh SSF, Frances CSF, Christopher John SSF.

Paihia Prayer Presence

No brown habits but a Franciscan prayer presence in Paihia in this year leading up to Christmas Day 2014 when we celebrate 200 years since Samuel Marsden preached at Oihi Bay with Ruatara.

“Behold I bring you tidings of great joy”...

The Third Order of St Francis; a Religious Order that lives under one umbrella with the wider family of our First Order Brothers and Sisters, our Second Order in Oxford England each following the way of St Francis and Clare, each bringing their own Aims, Principles and Order but united as three living out a Gospel message of inclusion love and joy.

At the Convocation in 2012 we, as an Order, made a commitment to be a prayer presence in Paihia during Lent and Advent leading up to the celebration on Christmas Day 2014. The Auckland Tertiaries made this possible and need to be thanked for their time, commitment and generosity - individuals as well as a group.

It was wonderful to have the support of the people of the Uniting Parish of Paihia where we prayed and stayed (look it up on the website – www.centreforrecreation.org.nz/) and of St Paul's Anglican church where we prayed each day in this beautiful part of Aotearoa/NZ.

As a member of the Third Order and being part of this prayer presence during Holy Week I am conscious that faithful prayer, hospitality and re-learning our history connects us with those who are our foundations, those of the past, and yet also those of us here in the present, spending time to remember and to give thanks and to acknowledge our own uniqueness now and also to affirm what is yet to come, our future.

One is always conscious when you are on pilgrimage of the people who have walked before and whose lives have directed the place where they have lived. This is especially true of this area in the north, and as we visited Waitangi, the churches, and the graves as well as Oihi Bay we stopped and reflected, and re-membered. Our founding document very much in our thoughts.

Walking down to the Marsden cross from the Interpretive Centre, spending time at the cross and thinking of those who came ashore that first Christmas morning, as well as those who heard Marsden's Christmas message which would have been translated by perhaps Ruatara (who knows) and then walking back up to be met by members of the Pihopatanga who are responsible for planning the visit to this place during General Synod, and

to be told by them of their knowledge of our prayer presence was a highlight on it's own.

Reading Bishop Kito's comments in the last Taonga reminded me again of the flourishing of the gospel here in Aotearoa and our own particular gift to our Anglican communion and I also echo the words which Bishop Kito reminds us that would have greeted those first Pakeha visitors to this Bay – a hari – a dance of joy – rang around the hills.

As he said in his article I also echo. It's like giving your whakapapa. This is the whakapapa of the gospel te timatanga o Te Rongapai (the beginning of the Gospel) that began here in Oihi then throughout the land.

I personally thank those who made it possible for this prayer presence and a reminder that as a Religious Order we are committed to unite in prayer regardless of who we are,

I urge our wider Church to pause to give thanks and to re-member. We have much to give thanks for. How we share the Christmas message in 2014 may be a little different from 200 years ago. However the essence is the same.

“Behold I bring you tidings of great joy”...

Peace and all good to all in this land we call Aotearoa.

Dorothy Brooker tssf

Anniversaries

The last few months have seen a number of significant celebrations with the brothers of the province.

Alfred BoonKong

On Wednesday 2nd April, Alfred BoonKong marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of his profession in vows. A group, which co-incidentally numbered 25, joined together at the Stroud Hermitage to celebrate.



Damian Kenneth

On Friday 11th April, the festival of George Augustus Selwyn (first and only Bishop of New Zealand), Damian Kenneth reached his thirtieth anniversary of profession which was remembered in the Offices in the oratory.

Damian Kenneth & Brian

Two birthdays come in the same week. On the 11th of March Damian Kenneth made the big Seven Oh! And on Friday that week - 15th - Brian celebrated his 89th birthday. A rather talkative

group gathered at a buffet restaurant in the city to make merry.

Chris Barfoot TSSF

Saturday 10th May a group of tertiaries, friends and brothers joined Chris and Pat Barfoot at their home to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Chris Barfoot's profession in vows as a member of the Third Order. Incidentally Brother Brian, who received Chris's vows, was present at the party.

Brian

By the time we have got this copy through the system, Brian will have celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination to be priesthood on Trinity Sunday, June 15th. It is planned that Brian will preside at the Cathedral Eucharist that day followed by a lunch with friends. We will have photos in a later issue.



Some Changes of Ministry

Over the years that the Franciscan Brothers have been in Hamilton, the Friary of the Divine Compassion has been involved in a number of forms of ministry. Living at the heart of Te Ara Hou Village offers a wonderful space for a ministry of presence, hospitality and prayer.

Last year, with Brothers Brian and Damian's ill health, and the presence in the Friary of both Doug Pratt as a SSF Companion, and Phil Dyer as a Third Order brother, gave opportunity to consider if we could become involved with new forms of ministry involving others working onsite in the village.

As a result the front house of the Friary will include a new Centre of Spirituality, Education and Justice, working under the general oversight of Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley, Karen Morrison-Hume (Anglican Action Missioner) and Br Damian.

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The Friary of the Divine Compassion will continue to function in very much the same way as before.

Br Brian will continue living in the flat and we will continue to use the Oratory for our daily prayers.

Our Library is being re-catalogued and will be able to be accessed both at the Friary and also online through the Kinder Library network of Anglican Libraries.

The old office and interview room is being altered to become one large office from which Maree Aldridge, (currently Centre of Social Justice, Anglican Action); Rev Peter Osborne (Ministry Officer and Vocations Director for the Diocese of Waikato) and Phil Dyer (TSSF) will work.

Plans are underway for a new small cabin to replace the present interview room and be also available as a private place for individual Quiet Days.

The Friary will still hold regular Friary events, Quiet Days and offer Spiritual Direction and limited overnight hospitality.

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Divine Compassion
Brian
Damian Kenneth
Phil Dyer tssf

Stroud, NSW

St Bernadine
Alfred BoonKong, Bruce-Paul,
Christopher John

Sri Lanka

Devasaranaramaya
Lionel

Sydney, NSW

Noel-Thomas

Eastertide Chapter 2014

The Eastertide chapter of the Province of the Divine Compassion was held at the Friary, Hamilton, April 25-28. Six brothers were physically present for the meeting (Bruce-Paul, Christopher John, Clark Berge, Daniel, James Andrew and Raphael Suh), and Stephen joined by Skype from Korea. The Rev'd John Heberton, Provincial Minister of the Third Order was able to be present with us for one afternoon.

Chapter business often comes under the same headings each time, such as review of our life and ministry, but some of the specific items were:

Discernment of ways of responding to recent vocational enquirers and aspirants in the four countries of our province (Aotearoa, Australia, Korea and Sri Lanka).

The Vows Book: Anglican Teaching on the Vows of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. This book written by our Minister General Clark Berge is selling well. (Copies are available from Amazon).

A discussion on promotion of vocations and the encouragement of enquirers covered a range of areas such as strengthening our community life, finding opportunities for promotion, keeping an up to date web presence, printing and distributing leaflets, and producing a CD.

Review of our chapter meeting structures.

Reluctantly we agreed to release Simone from membership of the First Order. He is now back in Italy and preparing to test his vocation with the Order of Friars Minor (one of the Catholic Franciscan orders).

We heard a report about the Third Order in the Province of the Pacific. There is growth in most regions. A few First Order and Third Order members are planning a joint programme at Vaughan Park in Auckland and then in the Bay of Islands in Advent as part of the bicentenary celebrations of the coming of the gospel to Aotearoa.

SSF has a range of connections with organisations which bring us together with others such as Catholic Franciscans or other Anglican religious orders. There is good life here in these relationships.

Sunday afternoon was a break from the work of chapter. The Romanian Orthodox congregation which uses the Te Ara Hou chapel invited us to join them for a festive lunch to celebrate their patron St George. Later that afternoon Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley and a number of friary friends came to join us for Eucharist and afternoon tea and fellowship.

Many thanks to the Hamilton brothers for managing the practical aspects of our meeting. It was good for us to be together like this.



***Is God
Calling
You
To Be A
Franciscan
Friar
?***

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