

Franciscan News

Volume 9 Issue 1, July 2007



The San Damiano Crucifix in the friary dining room at 45 Victoria Street, Waverley. This Crucifix was made by Fr Peter Confeggi, presently parish priest at Mt Druitt, Sydney.

Francis was inspired through this crucifix and he responded at that time praying: "Great and Glorious God, and my Lord Jesus Christ, enlighten the darkness of my mind. Give me a right faith, a firm hope, and a perfect love. Grant that I may know you, Lord, so that I may always and in all things act according to your most holy and perfect will."



*Provincial Office
47 Victoria Street
Waverley NSW 2024
Tel: (02) 9369 9300
Fax: (02) 9369 9322*

Dear Friends,

It is wonderful to greet you again in this very busy year for the Friars of our Province. We have begun preparations for our Provincial Chapter in September. At this gathering to be held in the last week of September, we will be reflecting on our commitments and how best we can continue to flavour the Church in this part of the world with the Franciscan Charism. We will attempt to make plans for the next three years and also elect new Leadership for the next three to six years.

To help us in our preparations we welcome Friar Tom Nairn from the Sacred Heart Province (Chicago U.S.A.). He is presently moving around the Province and he will talk and pray with all the Friars and help us to discern the direction we will take over the next three years. Friar Tom will meet many of the Bishops we work with and no doubt many of you will see and meet him as well. At our Chapter he will oversee the election of the next Provincial Minister, Vicar Provincial and Definitors. I ask you to continue to keep us in your prayers at this time.

St Francis saw God mirrored through all creation which engendered a deep reverence for all life and a child-like wonder for creation. Only such an appreciation and respect for the environment will save today's world from the mounting ecological crises that face us. Francis' love for both God and humanity were all-consuming. It led him not only to embrace the leper, clothe the poor and feed the hungry, but also to enter into dialogue with the enemy during the Crusades. Francis' courageous gesture is a salutary reminder that in the words of St Paul, there is "a still more excellent

way". What a shame we could not organise a meeting of St Francis and our local politicians!

As I have moved around our Province I am constantly reminded and inspired by how many people are touched by the simplicity of St Francis and motivated towards deepening their faith through their encounter with Franciscan

"Give a man a fish; he lives for a day. Teach a man to fish; he lives a lifetime!"

Spirituality. I am also conscious that Friars have shared with me how their vocation has been strengthened through the commitment of those who work with us, through our parishioners, through those who come to pray at our Retreat Centre – we are all

blessed to belong to the Franciscan Family and I hope that through your reading of this newsletter you will gain further insight into the lives of the Friars of this Province.

The Feast of St Clare is approaching on 11th August. Happy Feast for this wonderful woman of the Church!

So, enjoy your reading and may we continue to pray for each other.

Stephen Bliss ofm

Stephen Bliss ofm

Provincial Minister

Poor Clare Elections

The Poor Clares at Bethlehem monastery, Campbelltown, will elect an Abbess and Council on Thursday 9 August. NSW friars have been invited to a prayer afternoon at the monastery on 6 August to pray for the Poor Clare elections and the friars' Provincial Chapter.



Franciscans and WYD

The Definitory has appointed friar **Paul Ghanem** as the Province's co-ordinator for preparations for World Youth Day in 2008. Paul is already thinking about possibilities, plans and ideas from his current location in Nazareth and will take up the full-time WYD appointment, based at the Provincial Office, when he returns from the Holy Land in mid-August. Before Paul returns to Australia, he will attend the Chapter of Mats in the Holy Land for friars under ten years' professed. There he will have an opportunity to connect with other young friars who may be planning to come to Australia in July 2008 with groups from their respective Provinces.

Paul will be assisted by a committee of friars: **Matthew Beckmann, John Boyd-Boland, Harry Chan** and **Carl Schafer**. Carl is also organising a separate pre-WYD program in Sydney for Franciscan Youth (*You.Fra*) who will be attending, mainly from Europe where *You.Fra* is a strong movement.

Two lay people have been employed to work with the Franciscan team. Mr Benjamin Galea will work full-time in Sydney on the Franciscans' WYD plans from 2 July 2007 until August 2008. He will be based at the Provincial Office. Mrs Caitlin King will work part-time in Brisbane from the same date.

In Sydney, the friars intend to host a Renewal of Baptismal Promises liturgy on Bondi Beach and hope to make available the three parish churches as 'quiet prayer havens' in the afternoon and evenings. In Brisbane, it is envisaged that there will be a three-day program of Franciscan themes in the week prior to Sydney's WYD events and based around the facilities of the Franciscan schools at Kedron. Much work needs to be done to develop both programs and the committee has until November to present their events to the WYD Organising Committee for approval. All events require the approval of the Organising Committee before being listed in the official guidebook for pilgrims.

Paul, Ben and Caitlin can be contacted

on the following specific email addresses for WYD information:

Paul Ghanem
wyd08@franciscans.org.au

Benjamin Galea
wyd08_sydney@franciscans.org.au

Caitlin King
wyd08_bne@franciscans.org.au

Mangere Parishes

Following discussions between the bishop of Auckland, Patrick Dunn, and Provincial Minister Stephen Bliss – and in consultation with various other people involved – the Definitory has agreed that the Province will withdraw from the Mangere parishes at the end of the present contract in January 2008. The matter has been under consideration for some time and both the Foundation Council and friar Ken Cafe, pastor, have been informed of the difficulty in finding an extra friar to work full-time in the parishes. The partnered parishes of St Anthony (Mangere Bridge) and St Thérèse (Mangere East) are the largest in New Zealand. Ken Cafe and Sr Rosalie Johnson SJC are the full-time pastoral staff; friars Albert Williams and Anthony Malone assist with Masses.

At a meeting with the bishop earlier this month attended by Stephen Bliss and Anthony Malone, Bishop Dunn announced that his Appointments committee had recommended that an available team of Redemptorist priests take up ministry in 2008.

When Ken Cafe was appointed pastor in 2002, he inherited a diocesan plan to partner the two parishes and a building program which eventuated in the construction of a large church in Mangere East. He was assisted initially by friars Iose Ale, Bernie Thomas and later by Alban Mitchell. Attempts to find permanent full-time assistant pastors from within the Province and from the SAAO region have proved fruitless.

The bishop regrets that the Franciscans will no longer be pastors of St Anthony parish which they began in 1968 with Fr Claver Munday as first pastor. He would welcome the Franciscans taking another

(smaller) parish if a friar was available but this is a separate decision for another time.

In the meantime, Ken Cafe has established a truly professional and efficient organisation in the partnered parishes. With lay involvement, Ken and the parish team provide pastoral care to the poor and not-so-poor, faithful and unchurched, young and old, Samoan and 'Palangi' – a sure foundation for the incoming pastors. Ken will take sabbatical leave in 2008. More details of the friars' withdrawal will be available in the coming months.

SAAOC Meeting

Ten friars of the South Asia, Australia, Oceania Conference (SAAOC) met in Singapore, 10-15 June, for the annual conference meeting. Also present was the Definitor General for the region, Friar Ambrosio Nguyen van Si. The meeting was relocated at short notice from Pakistan to Singapore due to visa difficulties and safety issues in Pakistan. Samson Shukardin (Custos, Pakistan) spoke of the disappointment of his brothers who were looking forward to the first such meeting there in over two decades. The SAAOC meeting participants also expressed their regret at not being able to share the hospitality of their Pakistani brothers.

The first two days were spent discussing the issue of sexual abuse and professional misconduct and learning about the implications of the Apostolic Letter "Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela". Anthony Malone presented several papers on the topic. The meeting also addressed the "Guidelines about certain *Graviora Delicta*" published by the General Curia in 2005. Other general business was transacted and the meeting focused on how the various entities in the SAAOC region can assist each other in areas of formation,



finances and missionary evangelisation. The Ministers attended the St Anthony Day liturgy and celebrations prepared by the friars-in-formation of the Custody of St Anthony.

The Ministers recounted their positive experiences at the 2006 Extraordinary General Chapter and proposed some themes for the 2009 General Chapter. The Definitor General gave a brief report on his visits to entities in the Asia/Oceania region and thanked Stephen Bliss and Paskalis Syukur (Indonesia) for their leadership of the Conference over the past four years.

Padua's Strategic Directions

Bob Out (Rector) and Michael O'Brien (Vice Rector Formation) met with the Definitory on 22 June to lead a discussion on the Franciscan ethos at Padua College, Kedron, in order to develop goals, strategies and achievement indicators for the next five-year plan for the College. Bob and Michael asked the Definitory "What do want Padua to look like in five years time? ... How do the friars want us to maintain and develop the Franciscan



Back: *Johnson MV (Thailand), Paul Smith (SAAOC Secretary, Australia), Ambrosio Nguyen van Si (SAAOC Definitor General, Rome), Anthony Malone (New Zealand), Samson Shukardin (Pakistan), Stephen Bliss (SAAOC President, Australia), Andrew Litigio (Sri Lanka)*
 Front: *Eduardo Armenta (Papua New Guinea), Gabriel Ngga (West Papua), Paskalis Bruno Syukur (SAAOC Vice-President, Indonesia), Michael D'Cruz (Singapore)*
 Unable to be present: *Arok Sundar (India), Vicente Kunrath (East Timor)*

A portion of the multi-purpose centre with the oval in the foreground and former friary and St Francis Hall - staff offices and administration building in the background. More progress photos and an artist's impression of the finished product can be viewed on the Padua website: www.padua.qld.edu.au



“Francis Haven” looking lush and green after the welcome rain and what it looked like when Paul Campbell ofm first planted the native trees.

ethos?” The college staff, Board of Directors and Parents and Friends Association are all keen to retain a strong Franciscan connection that is vibrant and relevant to the students and staff.

As well as focusing on the Franciscan ethos, the strategic plan entitled “Achieving the Vision 2011” sets goals and strategies for teaching and learning, pastoral care, staff formation, community building and facilities/resources development.

Copies of the draft document are available for information and comment from the Provincial Office.

“A passionate longing to grow, is what we need. There is no place for the anemic in spirit, the skeptics, the pessimists, the sad of heart, the weary, the immobilists. Life is ceaseless discovery. Life is movement.” Teilhard de Chardin

Visitor Arrived

Friar Tom Nairn from Sacred Heart Province USA arrived in Sydney on 18 June and attended the Definitory meeting 20-22 June in preparation for visitation of the Province. He left Sydney on 22 June for Queensland and will continue to move around the Province for the next two months.

Tom visited Australia in 1986 when he taught Moral Theology for a semester at YTU. Currently he teaches at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. Tom has conducted two general visitations previously, one in South Africa and one in East Africa.



YTU President

Lawrence Nemer SVD has been appointed as interim President of Yarra Theological Union for 2008 until a permanent appointment is made in 2009.

Lawrence has taught Missiology and Church History at YTU for many years. Prior to coming to Australia in 1991, he taught for twenty years at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He has also lectured part-time in the Philippines and United Kingdom.

Kathleen Williams RSM completes her tenure as President at the end of 2007.



Editors:
Noel Fauth ofm
Noel English ofm