

Receptions, Professions, Jubilees

The first two months of the year saw some 'new brothers' embracing the Franciscan life and several 'senior brothers' celebrating anniversaries of commitment.

In Singapore, Harry Chan and Vernon Chua made their first profession of vows on 5 January. Vernon will continue his studies in Singapore and Harry has moved to St James friary, Box Hill and begun studies at Yarra Theological Union.



Also on 5 January, seven men were received into the novitiate, three friars for the Custody in Singapore/Malaysia and four friars for the East Timor (ET) Guardianate (Indonesia Province). John Wong and Oliver Tham are their novitiate directors. It is the largest novitiate group in the Province since 1987 (8 novices). The friars are Adelino Da Concaicao, Paulino Da Costa, Mario De Oliveira, Silvestre Monteiro (all from East Timor), Andrew Ng, Randall Ng and Desmond De Silva (all from Singapore).

On 18 February, seven friars gathered at Star of the Sea friary, Waverley to celebrate their golden jubilee of first profession as friars minor: Tony Stott (Townsville), Matthias Conway (Papua New Guinea), Carl Schafer, Mario Ferlazzo and Christopher Gardiner (all from Sydney), Paul Fitzgerald (Brisbane), Robert Carden (Perth).

Also present were Tom Davison and Arthur Boland (50 years of solemn profession), Theophane Rush and Patrick McCormick (60 years of first profession)



Some Notes on the Friars

- **Lucian Armstrong** had a car accident on the Te Muri (holiday house) property on 14 February, resulting in a fractured ankle and swollen left knee. He spent two weeks in North Shore Hospital, before transferring to Auckland Hospital for further mobility rehabilitation. He will return to the Mt Roskill friary soon.
- **Matthew Beckmann** will study for an 'MA in Franciscan Studies' at St Bonaventure University, New York, from mid-2008 for two to three years. The Formation Council recommended that Matthew be given this opportunity with a view to future formation ministry and perhaps lecturing at YTU.
- **John Boyd-Boland** reports that he is enjoying sabbatical studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, USA. John also assists with ministry duties at St Anthony Shrine, Boston (the friary where he resides) as his academic schedule permits. While John is away until June, **Bernie Thomas** is acting parish priest at Kedron.

● **Mario Debattista** attended in February the International Congress for Secretaries of Formation. Mario represented the South Asia, Australia, Oceania Conference of the Order (SAAOC). A bonus for Mario was that the meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya, and he was able to travel to Tanzania to meet up again with many friars with whom he lived during his seven years in Africa prior to returning to Australia in 2000.

● **Christopher Gardiner** took up residence at Good Shepherd Seminary, Homebush (Sydney) in January. After five years as spiritual director for the diocesan seminarians in Melbourne, Chris was invited to join the Sydney seminary staff.

● **Gonsa Saur**, a friar of the West Papua Custody who had been living at St James friary, Box Hill, returned home in December and was ordained priest on 13 January. Gonsa studied spirituality and formation ministry while in Australia to prepare for formation work in the Custody of West Papua.

● **Bonaventure Tung** (Taiwan Province), based at Ashfield and chaplain to the Chinese community in Sydney, has been elected as a Definitor (Provincial councillor) of his home Province. He will return to Taiwan after Easter. Martin Low (from Singapore) has taken up the role of chaplain to the Chinese Catholic Community and Asian students in Sydney.

Riverside Friary Sale

The Archdiocese of Hobart is preparing to sell the land which it owns surrounding the Riverside (Launceston) friary and church. For economical reasons – and given that the Order’s contract to staff the parish finishes in January 2008 – the Provincial Council and Archdiocesan property managers have agreed to combine the Order-owned property with the archdiocesan-owned land for sale at the same time. In the meantime, the Archdiocese has purchased a house near the parish school for use as a presbytery from 2008. October 2006 marked fifty years of Franciscan presence in Tasmania, during which time approximately fifty friars have served in the Trevallyn/Riverside/West Tamar parishes.



Not a Drop Wasted

The tanks installed by Garry Hill to collect rainwater from the Waverley church roof received a mention on the front page of the Eastern Suburbs Spectator on 23 February. Garry installed five 2000 litre tanks at the rear of the church where they blend in well with the building and collect the water from the roof of the church. The night after the tanks were connected, a deluge filled them to capacity. The water is used for gardening and is also connected to the friary washing machines.

The newspaper quoted that Brother Garry’s concern about the importance of conserving water began while he was living in Papua New Guinea for 38 years. “Everyone had to live on tank or bore water and we used poly tanks so I knew they were good quality. Unlike traditional tanks, they don’t rust and no rust means a cleaner water product. We have an obligation with the way the climate is going to save every drop we can.” Garry’s testimonial should prove beneficial for the supplier, New Water.

Poor Clare Profession

Peta Hills made her solemn profession of vows during a Eucharist at Bethlehem Monastery on 15 February. Stephen Bliss, Provincial Minister, was principal celebrant, Bishop Peter Ingham presided, Champion Murray preached the homily and Abbess Annette Brown received Peta’s profession.

Peta’s family and friends from Western Australia were present. They joined with the nuns and friars for the liturgy and lunch that followed. In a very brief speech, Peta thanked all for being part of the “long journey”. Prior to coming to the Poor Clares in 2003, Peta was principal at Catholic College, Collie WA.



The photo shows Peta (right) receiving the profession ring from Annette Brown, Abbess.

Maryfields 'Way of the Cross'

This year commemorates 70 years since the then Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop John Panico, blessed the Stations of the Cross at Maryfields in the presence of more than 20,000 people. The original plaque commemorating that event was found recently and rededicated by Stephen Bliss during a liturgy at the Gethsemane statue on 25 February.

The first Way of the Cross liturgy was held at Maryfields in 1936. By the following year, the terracotta statues had been purchased from France and erected on site. Huge crowds attended for the next forty years, especially in the era when the novitiate or student house was situated at Campbelltown. Due to the diminishing numbers of friars, dwindling crowds and the emphasis on people attending liturgies in their local parishes, the Good Friday afternoon Way of the Cross ceased in 1990.

Ten years later, Theophane Rush was a key person in reviving the Way of the Cross which is currently held on Sunday afternoons during Lent. The Bishop of Wollongong preaches at one of the liturgies annually. A ceremony is also held on Good Friday morning which is well attended by parishioners of Campbelltown and surrounding parishes. The Way of the Cross is also celebrated on the Sunday nearest All Souls Day.

Well Deserved Award

Clare McShee, a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood, was made a member of the Order of Australia on Australia Day 'for service to the community through programs that support the rehabilitation of prisoners and provide assistance to their families'.

For the past twenty years, Clare has worked with the Victoria-based Australian Community Support Organisation which supports prisoners and their families. Clare visits sex offenders in Victorian prisons to assist with their rehabilitation as well as assisting released offenders to integrate into the community and monitoring their rehabilitation.

"It is extremely difficult in getting accommodation because the corrective services are very strict on where they can live", says Clare. "We aim to prevent there being more victims so we can help, assist and support these men in their rehabilitation."

World Youth Day 2008



The Provincial Council has discussed this matter at length over the past few months. At this stage, it is proposed that a Franciscan gathering will be held in Brisbane for a couple of days during the week before WYD 2008, to which young people from Franciscan parishes worldwide will be invited, before proceeding to Sydney. Discussions are also underway about what the Friars Minor may be able to provide in Sydney during WYD celebrations; all activities must be approved by the WYD Committee. It is also envisaged that a lay person will be appointed to co-ordinate the Province's WYD programs and activities.

Maryfields Dam 'Treasure'

Earlier this year, when the Maryfields (Campbelltown) large dam was at an unusually low level due to the drought, an old cash register and sawn-off shot gun were revealed. Police were called and took away the items to check against their register of local hold-ups. Fearing even more sinister evidence might be found, a search and rescue squad spent several hours in and around the dam. With recent bursts of heavy rain, the property looks very green. The dam level has risen again and other secrets are safe until the next drought.

Easter Blessings

The Franciscan Friars wish you the graces and blessings of the Easter Season. May the Risen Jesus walk with you always and may his Spirit be alive in your hearts and homes..