

Ecumenical Order of St Francis (TOR). 03] 6331 8996

From the Minister General



Trinity 7.

Firstly, I must apologise for the lateness of putting this newsletter together and getting it out. As I get older it seems that the year seems to go faster and faster. In January we held our annual retreat and chapter, which went very well. Later in January I had to have several blood tests and was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes – so I have been on a strict diet and exercise (walking) programme and have lost nine kilo's that the last blood test in April shows no more type 2 diabetes, however, I must now keep on the programme to maintain my health to keep the diabetes under control. This took some getting used to and so there were several things that unfortunately shelved for a while.

On March 8th I was elevated to the position of Archbishop of Tasmania, which was an honour and a privilege I never dreamed of. For those who have missed the past two news letters they can be downloaded from our web site at www.churchofantioch.net/EOSF/.

Our three Secular Franciscan Order Fraternities are going along well and on the 8th of August Dr Olga Marinovic will be receiving her daughter Lily Marinovic to life profession in our St Margaret of Cortona Fraternity in Bundaberg. Please pray for Lily as she prepares to make her life profession.

Br Giles is progressing well since his by-pass surgery and is maintaining a valued Ministry in the community of Gagebrook, and will be in September will be in Launceston for our friary and clergy training day.

New Monstrance for St Anthony's Chapel



In thanksgiving to the generous gift to the Ecumenical Order of St Francis (TOR) we are able to purchase a new Monstrance. Our original one which was made from a form of pewter and some other metal has been slightly damaged from heat over the past year and was bent out of shape and has been made weaker from the repair, and the special clip that holds the host was lost by the Jeweler and a modified one made that is not easy to use, now needs to be replaced.

When it arrives we will be holding a special dedication of the Monstrance and thanksgiving service. Our chapel is now almost completed with all it needs; all that is needed is a nice bowl for the Holy Water, and a lavabo bowl.

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RIP. The late Peter John Dudgeon (SFO).

On December 5th 2008 Peter passed away quietly at home. Peter had been involved with the Ecumenical Order of St Francis for the past eleven years – he attended the Wednesday evening study and Mass and the Sunday mass when he was not involved with his Cricket and Football clubs. He spent many a lunchtime on Sundays with us at the St Anthony's Friary. Peter's estate left the community some money for a Monstrance, as when Peter was involved with us we never had one in those days. So in compliance with his bequest we have been able to obtain a Monstrance within the amount left to the community for this. Once this arrives and is consecrated we will be holding Benediction on the first Sunday of each month at 4.00pm. If proven popular we will extend it to twice a month.

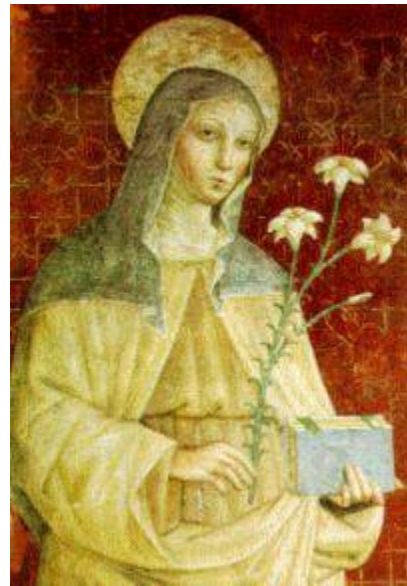
St Clare of Assisi. 1194-1253

At the beginning of the 13th century, when luxury and sensuality held sway, St. Francis of Assisi made his appearance, giving to men the example of a poor and penitential life. But God wished also to give the vain and pleasure-loving women of that period an example of contempt of the world's vanities. For this mission he chose Clare, the daughter of a prominent and noble family of Assisi, born January 20, 1194. Her father was Favarone de Offreduccio, count of Sassorosso; her mother, the servant of God Ortolana, who died in the odor of sanctity.

Before the child's birth it was revealed to the mother that her offspring would be a brilliant light in the world. This light the mother detected in her daughter from her earliest years. Besides being favored with personal beauty, Clare possessed a charming personality and rare qualities of mind. She was a favorite in the family, and hardly had she attained to young womanhood, when several suitors sought her in marriage.

But her virtues surpassed the gifts with which nature endorsed her. She interested herself in the poor and frequently denied herself things so as to be able to give more to the poor members of Christ. She loved prayer, and it was her sweetest delight to surrender her heart to sentiments of ardent devotion before Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Beneath her beautiful garments she wore a sharp penitential belt in order to honor the sufferings of Christ and to preserve herself a chaste virgin for His sake.

She was 18 years old when she heard St. Francis preach in the cathedral of Assisi during the Lent of 1212. His words on contempt of the world and on penance, and particularly the holy example he set, so earnestly affected Clare, that she conferred with him and soon recognized that God was calling her to lead a life similar to his in the seclusion of a convent. She did not hesitate to carry out God's plans. Realizing that her family, intent only on a brilliant future for her in the world, would oppose her vocation in every way, she had to leave home in secret.



On Palm Sunday she went to church, dressed in her richest garments, to attend divine services. That night, attended by an elderly relative, she went to the little chapel of Sty. Mary of the Angels, where St. Francis and his brethren came to meet her with lighted candles in their hands. Before the altar she removed her beautiful head-dress, then St. Francis cut off her hair and covered her head with a veil of common linen. In place of rich garments, she received a coarse penitential garb and was girded with a white cord. This was the way in which the mother and founder of the Poor Clares was invested on March 18, 1212. For the time being, St. Francis placed her in a convent of Benedictine sisters.

When Clare had successfully overcome the great opposition of her family, who had intended to force her to return home, her sister Agnes joined her in the sacrifice. St. Francis arranged a little convent for them near the church of St. Damian. There the number of consecrated virgins soon increased. They served God in great poverty, strict penance, and complete seclusion from the world according to a rule which St. Francis gave them as his Second Order. Clare was obliged in obedience to accept the office of abbess in 1215 and to continue in it for 38 years until her death. But her love for humility found compensation in the performance of the lowliest services toward her sisters. In spite of her great physical sufferings, she set her sisters a striking example of zeal in penance and prayer.

In the year 1240 an army of Saracens who were in the service of Emperor Frederick II drew near Assisi. They rushed upon the little convent of St. Damian that lay outside the city and had already scaled the walls of the monastery. In mortal fear the sisters had recourse to their mother, who was ill in bed.

The saint, carrying the pyx containing the Most Blessed Sacrament, had herself carried to a convent window. There she pleaded fervently with the Lord of heaven in the words of the Psalmist (Ps 73:19), "Deliver not up to beasts the souls, that confess to thee, and shield thy servants whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood." A mysterious voice coming from the Host said, "I shall always watch over you." Immediately panic seized the besiegers. A ray of brilliant light which emanated from the Blessed Sacrament had dazzled them. They fell down from the walls and fled from the place. The convent was saved and the town of Assisi was spared.

After suffering from serious illness for 30 years, Clare felt that her end was drawing nigh. After she had received the last sacraments, she and one of her sisters beheld the Queen of Virgins coming with a large escort to meet her, the spouse of Jesus Christ. On August 11, 1253, she entered into the joys of eternity and on the following day her body was buried. Pope Alexander IV canonized her already in the year 1255. She was chosen as the universal patroness of television in 1958.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

We beseech Thee, O Lord, grant us Thy servants who devoutly celebrate the feast day of the holy virgin Clare, to be made partakers of the joys of heaven and co-heirs of Thy only-begotten Son. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

A Side Serve of French Friars.



**ECUMENICAL ORDER
OF ST FRANCIS (TOR)**
118a Margaret Steet
Launceston Tasmania 7250

