

Franciscan Angles

A Newsletter of Anglican Franciscans in Aotearoa New Zealand

2009 - 2

50th Anniversary Celebration in Papua New Guinea

The 50th Anniversary of the arrival of the First Order Franciscan Brothers in Papua New Guinea was celebrated at the Haruro Friary, near Popondetta, in July. Franciscan Brothers and Sisters came from many parts of the world. It was a great day of Papuan-New Guinea celebration: well planned and organised by our PNG Brothers.



The brothers prepare to process for the Eucharist

A large number of Orokaiva dancers in traditional dress with their drums: singing and dancing led the procession for the Eucharist. Throughout the service there were points at which there was dancing by representative groups of Franciscan Brothers, Sisters of the Visitation, Melanesian Brothers, theological college students and the local Sunday school — all done so reverently.

The President of the

Eucharist was the Bishop of Popondetta, Joseph Kopapa. I was privileged to be the preacher. We tried not only to recall the past with thanksgiving, but to be aware of the challenges of the present, and the need to take risks in faith and hope for the future, seeing religious orders as beacons of light.

At the end of the service the dancers led us all to a shrine in the garden where deceased brothers

are recalled, especially two Papuans, Philip and Timothy Joseph and American Brother Justus, who was the Principal of Newton College. A plaque was unveiled and blessed by Brother Clark Berge. The Minister General of the Third Order, Rev Dorothy Brooker was present as this also marked the beginning of the Third Order.

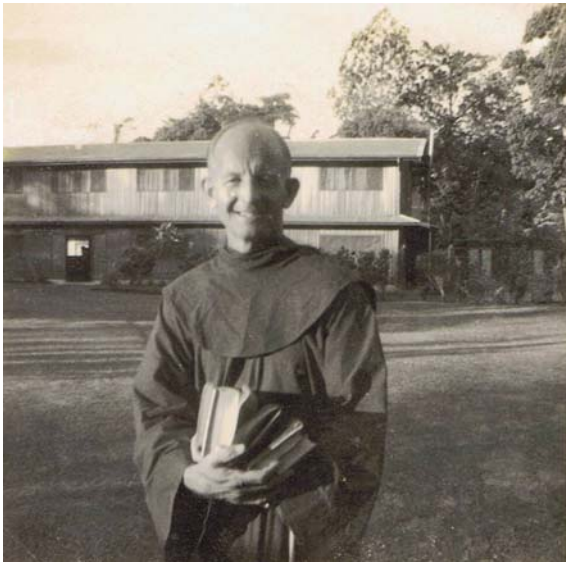
Feasting and dancing with drama followed.

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*All those years ago! 1973?
Brothers in Papua New Guinea.*

*(back row) - Philip, Leslie, a Solomon Islands novice, Peter, Hilarion, Andrew, Reginald.
(middle row) Comins Romano, Francis Damian, Brian.
(front row) Peter Timothy, a Torres Strait Islands novice, Alfred, Kabay.*



*Brother Brian ssf.
(left) As founding Principal of the Evangelist's College, Jegarata (now Haruro) 1969 and
(right) on his welcome at Popondetta Airport 2009.*

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Nearly a thousand people were present. Much food; pigs, poultry and vegetables, had been cooked through the night. Speeches were given by people of the wider community. Oliver Ambo, the deputy Governor and son of late Bishop George Ambo, spoke of behalf of the Government and Bishop Joseph Kopapa on behalf of the church.

Gifts were exchanged and Brother Lawrence Hauje spoke for the

province. The proceedings concluded with evening prayer led by Bishop Tevita Talanoa. It had been an exhilarating and exhausting day and one long to be remembered. This event was commemorating not only what is happening in PNG but also throughout the South Pacific. From PNG the First and Third Orders of SSF have spread to the Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand and beyond to Asia. One of the reasons Bishop Philip

Strong invited the Society to come was his firm belief that there would be vocations to the Franciscan way of the Religious Life among Melanesians. This visit showed me that there was not only an increase in the number of Brothers but also in maturity. There are now thirty brothers in PNG, all of whom are local people and a larger number in the Solomon Islands. We can give thanks to God.

Br Brian SSF.

Brother Colin — Haere ra Koro

In 1970 four Brothers from four nations and three different SSF Provinces were chosen to pioneer our Franciscan First Order presence in Aotearoa New Zealand. One of them was a large Solomon Islander – Brother Colin – from Malaita. They were first at St Francis House, Greys Avenue, Auckland and then at St Mary's Vicarage, Glen Innes.

Colin was one of the first Solomon Islanders to come to test his vocation as a friar at what is now known as Haruro (formerly Jejerata) near Popondetta in Papua New Guinea. The other two were Michael Davis, who died in 1989 and Comins Romano who returned to Haruro this year from the Solomons for the celebration in July of our being 50 years in Papua New Guinea. Both were from the island of Ulawa. These three Solomon Island Brothers had come to join SSF before there was a friary in the Solomons. Colin had previously resided and worked at Pawa boys' secondary school on Ugi Island. Now we have to record that he has died in the general hospital in Honiara after a long illness, aged 73. He was professed in 1969.

Colin had become the "patriarch" of our Brothers in the Solomons, being wise and faithful, though a little too fond of betel nut. Many people sought his advice and encouragement. Having an infectious sense of humour he could tell many good stories and was a gentle mimic. He played the guitar and had a good bass voice. He was a reader but often admitting that "this book is too big for my head". His sermons were powerfully delivered. He hated nonsense and pretence. And having a keen understanding of justice he founded and managed a school for girls at Fouala-a whom he felt were deprived of educational opportunities compared with boys.



This was his main work in the second half of his Franciscan life. He was ordained priest at a late age at the hands of the then Bishop of Malaita.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.



Bits and Pieces

- ◆ **Brian** had a time of retreat with the Sisters of the Sacred Advent while he was in Brisbane for the All Saints-tide Chapter meeting.
- ◆ **Simone** has had a paper (in Italian) published in the theological journal, *Servitium: Quaderni di ricerca spirituale*, Sept/Oct 2009.
- ◆ **Damian Kenneth** has undergone the surgical removal of three malignant melanoma and has two more to go fairly soon.
- ◆ **Stephen KFB** spent time visiting the friaries in New Zealand and Australia.
- ◆ **Christopher John** conducted a number of workshops, seminars and retreats throughout New Zealand during October

The Good Portion

As I begin my novitiate at the friary in Hamilton, I still get asked what brought me over here from Italy. I have also found out that some people thought I came straight, all the way from Europe, to join the Society of S. Francis over here! In reality, my story with SSF started over one year ago in America, where I first met the Brothers and had a first experience in the life of the community. I was already living in New Zealand at that time and I was in New York to visit some friends. I came across the Friary of Little Portion almost by chance, for I was looking for a retreat centre and that place came up first on the list. When I got back to NZ, I got in touch with the brothers in Hamilton and after a while I begin living with them.

I have to say neither Franciscan life, nor religious life, were totally unknown to me: the former because St. Francis (we call him Francesco), St. Clare (Chiara) and their spirituality go way beyond religion in Italy and they are deeply and truly interwoven with the local culture and the way of living; and the latter because I had already had a period of discernment in a Benedictine monastery. In fact I have an enduring conviction that I was called to religious life long ago and that in spite of attempts to have a regular life, I have always had this strong sense of call reaffirmed.

The community life here doesn't differ too much from bigger religious houses around the world. We live under a rule and we treasure the life of prayer, the liturgy of the hours, the possibility of listening to the Word of God and above all the holy eucharist; but also our community seeks to be open, to welcome and listen to all, to share the joy and hope as well as the sorrow and distress of all people.

The life of each brother is centered on the service of praise offered to God in prayer and on the service offered to others through work, hospitality offered to guests, and service offered to the church and to different Christian churches and agencies.

Nevertheless, this way of life might sound quite odd to someone, but in fact I believe that by answering this call, we are not undertaking a new way of living the Gospel and we are not alone on this road, traveled by many Christians over the centuries. Before us, others with the same vocation, expressed in different ways according to the times and places in which they lived, have made this journey: Elijah and John the Baptist, the Desert Fathers and Mothers, Benedict and Scholastica, Francis and Claire, and many others.

After all, monks and nuns, present in the church from the first centuries, are men

and women who live their Christian vocation as a radical commitment, often at the margins of society and of the visible church, even at the cost of being marginalized. The monk looks toward the city and the church and remains in contact with them, never separating himself but expressing his complete solidarity through his prayer and intercession. He sometimes addresses a word or gesture to the city and church, or addresses them through his silence; but some of the time, in order to protect what has been entrusted to him, he finds it necessary to turn toward the desert, giving the impression that he has turned his back on the city and the church. But this turning away is in no way a gesture of disrespect: it is simply a sign of his thirst to return to God, in silence and attention.

Despite sharing so much of this vision, we need to say though that Franciscan spirituality is not monastic: rather than fleeing the world to find God, it seeks God in the world. A typical Franciscan idea is "the world is my cloister".

Francis had a deep experience of God in the run-down church of San Damiano: facing the wounded Christ on the cross, he met the God of compassionate love, who delights to be with the simple and those rejected by the world. In that image, he discovered his own wounds and the

deeper he entered into the mystery of Christ in his own life, the more he saw Christ in everyone and everything around him.

The God Francis saw wasn't the one asking for offerings or sacrifices but He was the one offering himself, sacrificing himself, giving himself to all His creation so that we could have life. Francis understood that it is God who is coming to seek us in order to be in communion with us.

The central act of our worship, the eucharist, is our way to respond to that and our thanksgiving to God, who allowed us to take part in His life.

In fact, all of our life should be a thanksgiving to God. Few things make me feel guilty like not dedicating enough time to prayer and praise to God. When that happens, I recall the word of Jesus to his disciples in the garden of the Gethsemane: "Could you not watch one hour with me?" (Mt 26.40) He was asking them to watch *with* him, to wait and be awake with him in the hour of crisis.

How many of us still immerse ourselves in activity, rushing everywhere, busy, busy, busy—because the call of Jesus to "keep watch and wait" seems too great a challenge. Yes, keeping watch is certainly one of the hardest things. Gethsemane reminds us that what we are asked to do is something more simple and difficult than



Br Brian and Br Simone in the friary garden

springing into action. We are asked to "be" rather than "do".

Francis himself was a man of prayer, even though his ministry to the lepers and his preaching the gospel seem to have overshadowed the centrality of prayer in his way of life. Certainly Francis considered prayer as the basis for following Christ as it is shown in all his writings.

As we follow in the footsteps of Francis and Clare, we are not trying to preserve a strange relic from the Middle Age, but even in the 21st century a life of renunciation and sacrifice is still a means by which we can obtain true freedom, even though it sounds like a paradox. The way of the Gospel is the opposite of the common mentality and we can really find ourselves, once we give up our own will and surrender to God. Instead, our modern culture is more

and more obsessed with individualism and consumerism and we live in the illusion that the more we have the happier we are. But such behavior has quite a devastating impact on our life and on our natural environment. As Christmas approaches and the race to get presents for family and friends and to organize parties starts, it might be useful to remember the answer of Jesus to Martha, who was left alone serving the Lord while her sister Mary was sitting at his feet listening to his teaching: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." (Lk 10.42). This good portion is all we need.

Br Simone was admitted as a Novice in the Society of St Francis at Morning Prayer on Friday 23rd October 2009.

Te Ara Hou Celebrates Ten Years

The social services village Te Ara Hou (The New Way) celebrated its 10th anniversary this month with a party attended by local dignitaries, agency workers, clients, residents and people from the neighbourhood.

In pre-European times the land was a village, Mangaonua, resourcing the local tribes with food from the stream and crops. After the land was it became a sizeable farm which was later subdivided. The present site became a residence for the Society for the Intellectually Handicapped, Christopher Park. From there it became Chanel Park the headquarters for the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton.

In 1999 the land and buildings were purchased by the Hamilton City

Council in order to facilitate the founding a social work village. To this end they retained ownership of part of the land and on-sold the buildings to a Trust set up for the purpose of operating and promoting the Village and to promote social services generally in the Waikato region. The remainder of the land was purchased by the Anglican Diocese of Waikato in order to preserve the potential of a village concept.

Te Ara Hou (The New Way) is an innovative village where we work together to respond holistically to meet people's needs: a community of agencies collaborating for the benefit of all. The village honours the partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The friary moved to Te Ara Hou in December 2001 and is an integral part of the village. The friary offers spiritual resources and encouragement for the staff of the various agencies on site; daily chapel offices and eucharist; hospitality to guests and visitors; and a place of peace, quiet and refreshment in the midst of an often hectic and confusing setting.

The present village is a model of co-operation and a tribute to the foresight of those who worked so hard for the vision they held.

Congratulations Te Ara Hou!

*Brothers Brian and Simone, part of the staff group during the celebrations on a very wet afternoon.
11 November 2009*





Is God Calling You To Be A Franciscan Friar ?

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The Society Of Saint Francis

I give and bequeath to the Australia/New Zealand Province of the Society of Saint Francis [First Order Brothers] the sum offor the general purposes of the work of the Society, and I direct that such bequest shall be free of all duties, and I declare that the receipt of the Minister Provincial for the time being shall be sufficient discharge for the same.

Franciscan Angles is published by the First Order of the Society of Saint Francis in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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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Intercessions

Please pray with us ...

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Alfred Boonkong

Bart

Brian

Bruce-Paul

Christopher John

Damian Kenneth

Daniel

Donald Campbell

James Andrew

Joseph

Lionel

Nathan-James

Noel-Thomas

William

Novice

Simone

Companion Brother

Douglas Pratt

Bishops' Protector

+ Roger Herft & Cheryl

+ David Moxon & Tureti

Vocations to the Religious Life
in New Zealand



The Profession in Life Vows of Br Nathan-James at St Phillip's Church, Annerley, All Saints Eve 2009



Christopher John, Daniel, Simone, Brian and Damian Kenneth at the Admission as a Novice of Br Simone, in the chapel at Te Ara Hou Village.

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