

FRANCISCAN NETWORK

June 2014

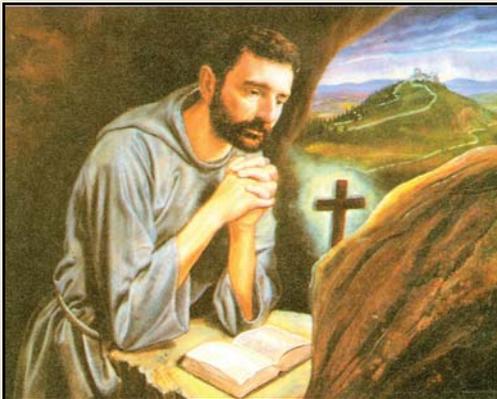
Published by the Missionary Franciscan Sisters, 4 Hennessy Lane, Kedron, Q 4031



Dear Friends,

Please forgive me for the very late arrival of this issue of the Franciscan Network. A series of mishaps sorely tested our patience and were completely beyond our control. Somehow or other, the wrong computer key was pressed, and alas all our snail-mail addresses were deleted - yes, just like that! Despite all our knowledge of technology, they were unable to be retrieved. So, no addresses - no mail! We have made a new list, but sadly I may have lost a few friends in the process of losing the addresses. Then my friend who does the printing of the Network, took a well-deserved holiday overseas, so I have had to wait for his return. I have had a complete knee replacement, so that slowed things up even further. Once again, my sincere apologies!

Have you ever asked yourself - how did Francis pray? Not an easy question to answer. However, Francis knew that our



earthly journey is a journey of prayer, and that without prayer our most persistent efforts are pointless. He knew that only prayer can lead to peace, both within ourselves and with those around us. Francis knew that God is where we are, but in our frantic world today very few stop to listen. Certain times of our lives can appear quieter, richer, fuller - and prayer should reflect those moments. There are on the other hand, moments which are full of anxiety and apprehension, but prayer is the action of the Holy Spirit within us - it is always a true and worthy offering.

Like Francis, we need to be still - to open our eyes to the world God has given us. We can choose to live blind to His splendour, deaf to His voice. We are people who in both the silent and busy corners of our life must remember to pray. We need to join Francis in mountain isolation - we need to pray - and like Francis, not only pray, but become a prayer ourselves.

- Sr. Liz

SATRIANO



Satriano borders on the town of Nocera, and is situated at the very limit of the mountainous territory of Assisi. It is not easy to arrive at this point and a visit to the little chapel here can be made only by those who have several days to spend in Assisi.

On entering the chapel, one sees a stone on the right side - on the stone is written the following: "In the summer of 1226, the Knights of Assisi paused here. They were carrying the dying saint back to his native place. The castle of Satriano once stood here." (The International Franciscan Committee decided to record the 700th anniversary of the event by building this chapel.)

Thomas of Celano wrote: "It came about that the blessed Francis was at the end of his strength while staying in the convent of Nocera. When the people of Assisi heard this, they sent a solemn embassy to bring him home. When the soldiers who were escorting Francis reached a miserably poor village called Satriano they found there was nothing to satisfy their hunger. No matter how hard they searched, they could find nothing to buy. They complained to Francis, who scolded them for trusting more in money than in God. He sent them back and told them to ask humbly for alms. The Knights swallowed their pride and asked for alms for the love of God and received food and gifts in abundance."

Every year, on September 20th, in memory of the occasion, young men on horseback retrace the road from Satriano to Assisi, escorting a relic of the saint.

BLESSED PETER TO ROT

Peter To Rot was a married layman and a native of Papua New Guinea. A brilliant and intuitive catechist, he was martyred “for the faith” in a Japanese concentration camp at the end of World War II, aged only 33.

Blessed Peter was born in 1912 in Rakunai, PNG, and is the first native of that country to be beatified. He was the son of a Melanesian tribal chieftain, Angelo To Puia and his wife, Maria la Tumul, who were among the first generation of Christians in that region.



From a young age, Peter was a very spiritual person, as well as being a brilliant student. It was even thought that he may have had a calling to the Priesthood. However, God had other plans. Peter began training as a catechist at the age of 18. He organized catechesis in Rakunai, as well as doctrinal classes and prayer gatherings. At the age of 24, he married Paula la Varpit and they had three daughters.

In 1942, the Japanese imprisoned Missionaries, but as Peter was not strictly a “missionary”, he was able to remain in Rakunai. Here he continued to provide prayer services, catechism classes, administered the Sacrament of Baptism and brought the Eucharist to the sick and dying. Soon the Japanese forbade all types of Religious gatherings and worship, and decreed that the practice of polygamy be reinstated.

When Peter stood up for the sanctity of marriage, he was arrested. Many members of the community tried unsuccessfully to have him released. He was executed for his faith in 1945 by lethal injection.

Peter was beatified by Pope John Paul II on January 17th, 1995. Perhaps the most beautiful part of the ceremony was the hymn sung to him in Pidgin English by his people. “Yu strong na Yu tru” - praising their new saint for being “strong and true.”

Blessed Peter To Rot, witness to faith and family, pray for us!

A Reflection

*I dare to say that God, though He be Omnipotent,
Could not give us more.
Though He be all Wise,
Knows not how to give us more.
Though He be all rich,
Has not more to give.*

- St. Augustine

FROM SR JO

So many times we are asked by others, “And what do you do, Sister?”, so when Sr. Liz asked me to write a few words about my life in Toowoomba, I had to really find an answer to that question!! Just what do I do here on the mountain top? After a very active ministry with more time out of Australia than in it, and at 83 years of age, the answer is not simple. What do I do? I have been told that in some parts of Africa when missionaries get to my age they are told “Thank you, sister. You have outlived your usefulness. You can go now!”

Have I outlived my usefulness? In some instances in our present day world, younger folk seem to be surprised when an older person can present themselves intelligently, can actually speak sense, can still contribute in meaningful ways. Of course, there are many times when I must admit that something is beyond me physically, and my memory fails me as I struggle to find the right word, but I believe that I still have something to contribute to my community and to the world just by being “me”! I think that age is not completely dependent on time or on the number of years, but more on my attitude to it, so I try to begin each new day with thoughts such as: “This is my life - this is my day and I can live it fully as an 83-year-old. Whatever happens this day will be good because God is good and I believe He will be with me this day - whatever happens.”

In our Franciscan Rule, the heading of one Chapter is: “Work and the Manner of Working.” Francis does not mention “what” we must do, but is very explicit on “how” we must work. For example, never wanting to be above others, serving all gently, unassumingly, respectfully, not quarrelsome or judgmental but with good humour, always with the greeting, “May the Lord give you peace.” So, as I walk the streets of Toowoomba, I



remind myself that I am responsible for my face! I try to remember to smile at people, to be friendly to young mothers and little children, to chat with the check-out people in the stores, to thank them for their service. I have offered my experience of mostly working in another culture to the centre for refugees and asylum seekers, mainly by teaching English as a second language. Elaine and I have a comfortable, beautiful home which reminds me to be thankful and to welcome all who come, willing to share our good fortune. So many times during any day you and I do so much that only God sees - and that's OK. He is the best audience of all.

We used to think of "mission" as foreign mission - somewhere "out there". Today, these frontiers are right on my doorstep. My mission means crossing the street, reaching out to others, not protecting my own self or getting bogged down in doing my own thing, but accepting our differences of age, colour, culture. It's a challenge not to do only what I love, but trying to love what I do, what I have right now. I used to have a poster which read:

*I keep on trying
I keep failing.
I fall down
I get up I dance!*

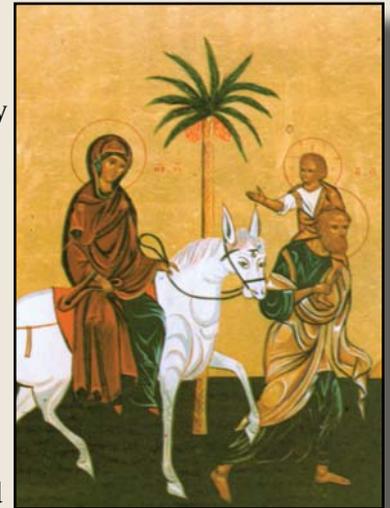
- Sr. Jo

REFUGEES

On the Feast of the Holy Family, Pope Francis dedicated the Sunday Angelus to welcoming refugees. His words invite us to reflect deeply on our own attitudes. The following is part of his address:

"Sadly, today immigrants are not made to feel welcome in many parts of the world. However, anyone who turns refugees away forgets that Jesus Himself was also a refugee. Along the painful path of exile, seeking refuge in Egypt, Jesus, Mary and Joseph experienced the hardships, the fear, the uncertainty and the unease of all refugees. The flight into Egypt, in light of Herod's threats, shows us that God is always present when humans are in danger as they flee their homeland."

As Christians continue celebrating the birth of Jesus into a refugee family over 2,000 years ago, the Pope urges us to think of those families who today flee from war and other grave dangers in search of security and a dignified life. What is MY stance today in the face of our overwhelming Refugee crisis? Had I lived at the time of Jesus, would I have rejected the Holy Family as they fled from Nazareth to Egypt - would I have joined my voice to those who may have demanded they be turned back to face Herod's persecution?



Let us pray to the Holy Family that our families may be places of communion and prayer, where ALL who have been hurt or traumatised will find ready comfort and healing in this great and blessed land of ours. Let us never forget that the flesh of Christ is the flesh of the refugees - let us never forget that the flesh of the refugee is the flesh of Christ.

FRANCISCAN CROWN

We are all familiar with the Rosary given to us by St Dominic. However, not many are familiar with a seven-decade rosary called the Franciscan Crown. It is also known as the Seraphic rosary or the Seven Joys of Our Lady. It dates back to the 15th Century and its beginnings were documented by a 17th Century Franciscan historian called Friar Luke Wadding (1588-1657).

A young man called James was a fervent devotee of Mary - every day he would visit the local church and lay a wreath of flowers on Our Lady's altar. Eventually, he sought entry into the Franciscan Order at Assisi, but early on in his Novitiate he found that he could

no longer continue this practice.

This saddened the new Novice, so he told Our Lady in prayer that he would leave the Order so that he could continue to bring her his wreath of flowers. It is said that she appeared to him and told him she would teach him to weave a far more precious wreath. Thus she taught him to pray the seven-decade Rosary with two additional Hail Marys in honour of the seventy-two years it is said that she lived upon earth.



Young Friar James began at once to recite the prayers as instructed. In Holy Obedience, the young man told the Novice Master what had transpired, and as a result the custom of reciting the seven joys of Our Lady became widespread.

These are the seven episodes in Mary's life which make up the traditional mysteries of the Franciscan Crown:

The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Nativity, The Adoration of the Magi, The Finding in the Temple, The Resurrection, The Assumption of Mary and her Coronation.

In many Franciscan communities, Sunday has been the traditional day to recite the seven decades of the Franciscan Crown.

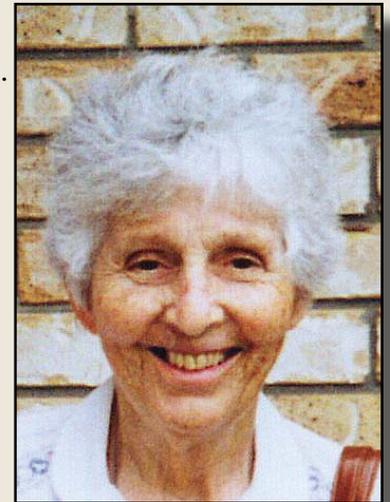
VALE SR MARY ROSE

Clair Wooden (known in Religion as Sr Mary Rose) was born on October 6th, 1923 in Newcastle, New South Wales. She was the third daughter of Frederick and Cecilia Wooden. Her father's conversion to Catholicism meant that his wealthy parents, who were not Catholic, disowned him. (Clair had a younger brother, Bill, and her elder sister, Cecilia also entered our Franciscan community, taking the name Sister Mary Lucy.)

Rose entered the MFICs on 25th March, 1945. Two years later she made her first Profession on December 8th. Her heart was set on going to China, but the Lord had other plans. She was chosen, with three other companions, to be among the first group of our sisters to go to Papua New Guinea. The year was 1949. The Franciscan Friars had invited them to

work with the women and children, so before leaving, Rose did a course in obstetrics and basic nursing skills at both the Mater and Royal Brisbane Hospitals.

Sisters Rose, Agnella, Agnes and Leo finally left Brisbane on the "Malaita" for PNG - Rose would spend the next 48 years on this mission. Her first appointment was to Fatima, but she also ministered in Ulau and Lumi. In the beginning she was involved in nursing, as well as education. However, after Independence in 1975, she returned to Fatima where she undertook Pastoral work. In 1997, Rose decided it was time to return to Australia - you can imagine the tears and the love that accompanied her farewell.



Rose became involved in Pastoral ministry in the parish of Evans Head in New South Wales before returning to Kedron in 2003. Here she was close to her sister, Lucy whose health was beginning to fail. Rose had great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. When her health began to decline in 2010, she would still make her way to the Chapel each day, and insisted on going to daily Mass in the Parish church, no matter how difficult it was for her. Rose then had a number of falls and had to be admitted to hospital. When the Doctors said there was no hope of recovery, she was taken to the Palliative Care Unit at St. Vincent's. A week after this, Rose quietly slipped away.

Dear Rose, you have been a faithful daughter of Elizabeth Hayes, and you have fulfilled your missionary dream. May you join the chorus of angels in singing the praises of the God you loved so much during your life here on earth.

IN CONCLUSION

Let us remember that prayer is not a competition, not an experience of winning or of accumulating good feelings and great insights. Prayer is about "showing up" with an open heart and mind, being willing and ready to grow and change.

Love,

Sr Liz