

Troubadour

Volume 62, No 3

Winter 2018





In the 12th century Christ spoke to St Francis of Assisi from this cross:

“Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is falling down.”

Don't complain about the Church in the 21st century.

Hear Our Lord's call and do something about it!

The Friars Minor have followed St Francis' example for the last 800 years.

Why not be one of them?

Contact Br Donal Walsh OFM, Franciscan Friary,
160 The Grove, Stratford, London E15 1NS
Tel: 020 8534 1964. Email: vocations@friar.org

Troubadour

A MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

at the service of

- The Franciscan Missionaries working throughout the world but especially in disaster areas.
- The Franciscan Missionary Union.



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COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Front cover: Gogo Sithili Sithole celebrating her birthday, St Antonine's Home.

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MISSION OFFICE:

FMU Director
Franciscan Friary,
270 Ballater Street,
Glasgow.
G5 0YT

EDITOR:

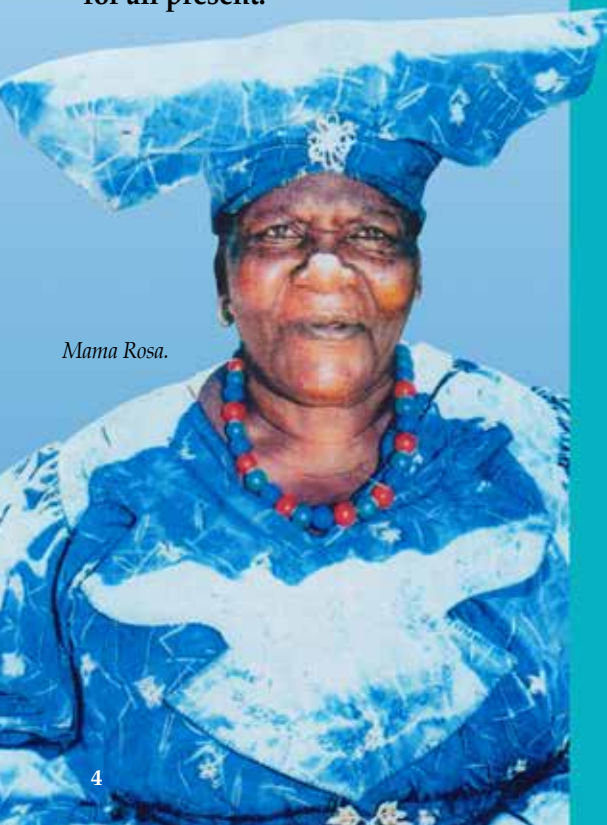
Br. Edmund Highton, ofm

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We are so blessed

Sr. Irene, one of the Holy Cross Sisters in Namibia, remarked during one conversation we had some time ago, that if we wanted to find a saint among the people in Namibia we should look at the grandmothers. Often when we have a ceremony to baptise infants we invoke holy people to intercede for the newly baptized and their parents, we ask our mother Mary, we ask St Peter, St. Paul and many others, we always end by asking the Saints of Namibia to intercede for all present.



Mama Rosa.

Like the friars in Glasgow and in many other places we here in Katutura, in Khomasdal, spend a lot of time preparing for and conducting funeral and memorial services for those who have gone home to God. I have no doubt that among those we accompany on their final journey are many who are Saints.

I was thinking along these lines as I prepared to celebrate the funeral mass for Mama Rosa Uatuva Kaheka on the 9th March 2018. She was 75 years of age when she left us on the 2nd of March. She gave birth to eight children, two of whom predeceased her. When she went home 32 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren and one great-grandchild were there to say good bye to her.

She was one of the pillars of Holy Redeemer Church in Katutura. In the early years of the church in the 1970s it was decided to divide the parish into small neighbourhood groups, they called them wards, she suggested that the ward where she lived should be named after St Maria Goretti, her suggestion was accepted and that remains the name of the ward today.

I got to know her very soon after we friars started our ministry here in Namibia. The first funeral we had to conduct was the funeral of Mama Rosa's daughter, her name Balbina Maretha Kaheka. Balbina was living with her boyfriend; he was the father of her 3rd born child, a son whom

they named John. Balbina was afraid of this man as he had been violent and had threatened to kill her. One Friday night early in January 2005 she went to the police station in Katutura to lay a complaint and to report his threats. The police left her at the station and went to look for the man in the township. They came back after one hour and said they could not find him. They advised her not to go back to the room she shared with this man but to go and sleep instead at her mother's place. She went to her mother's house and intended to sleep in the sitting room. At 2am the boyfriend broke the window of her mother's bedroom entered the house and in the presence of her mother, one sister, and two of her children attacked Balbina, stabbed her +- 18 times. She died on the spot.

We did our best to bury Balbina with dignity. Rosa was at that time and ever since, a rock of strength for the family and a source of great witness to all in the local community.

She took care of Balbina's three children; she cared for all her grandchildren. She was always the one who came to the church if there was a problem with papers, to make arrangements for baptism, first Holy Communion and confirmation.

I never heard her speaking ill of the man who killed her daughter or indeed of anyone and she never spoke of looking for revenge. Balbina's death was my first experience of femicide in Namibia. In later years people referred to such actions as passion killing or as one

of the ways in which Gender based violence rears its ugly head.

This killing of women by men who are their intimate partners is one of the most serious types of crimes in Namibia... We friars, together with our fellow church members, our bishops, our brothers and sisters in other churches talk about it, do our best to conscientize our members, our youth our men. We have attended rallies, prayer gatherings of all types.

We encourage men and women to seek for ways to express their disagreements, their anger, in ways that are non-violent. This advocacy is ongoing and we teach our people the Franciscan way of nonviolence as the way in which we try to live.

Rosa Kaheka taught her children, her grandchildren to respect each and every human being. She did this by word and example.

I REMEMBER HER AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

When Things are difficult I talk to her and will continue to do so.

I will continue to ask her to put in good word for me to the Almighty. I have no doubt but that she is close to Him.

I consider myself blessed to have known Mama Rosa, to have shared a little of her journey and I look forward to meeting her one day again. In the meantime when I invoke the saints of Namibia she will be among them.

KEY FINDINGS

The Femicide Census found that between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2016:

VICTIMS:

- 69% (n=78) of women were killed by a current or former intimate partner.
- 71% (n=8) of women were killed by a male family member, i.e. a son, father, brother, nephew or grandson.
- 12.4% (n=14) of women were killed by a man they knew, but who was of no intimate or familial relation to them.
- 7.9% (n=9) of women were killed by a stranger.
- The greatest number of femicides occurred within the London Metropolitan, South Wales and Greater Manchester police force areas.
- 75.2% (n=85) of women were killed at their own home, or the home they shared with the perpetrator.
- 77.4% (n=24) of women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse were killed within the first year that followed that separation. ⁽¹⁾

PERPETRATORS:

- 27.5% (n=30) of perpetrators were aged between 36 and 45.
- In 47 cases, perpetrators used a sharp instrument to kill their victims.
- 19 men suspected of killing a woman either killed themselves or died prior to trial.
- 37 perpetrators pleaded not guilty to murder, 28 of whom were found guilty of murder.
- 84 perpetrators were found guilty of murder, manslaughter or of causing death. ⁽²⁾

(1) This figure is of those women known to have separated from their partner/spouse only.

(2) At the end of November 2017, five perpetrators are awaiting trial.

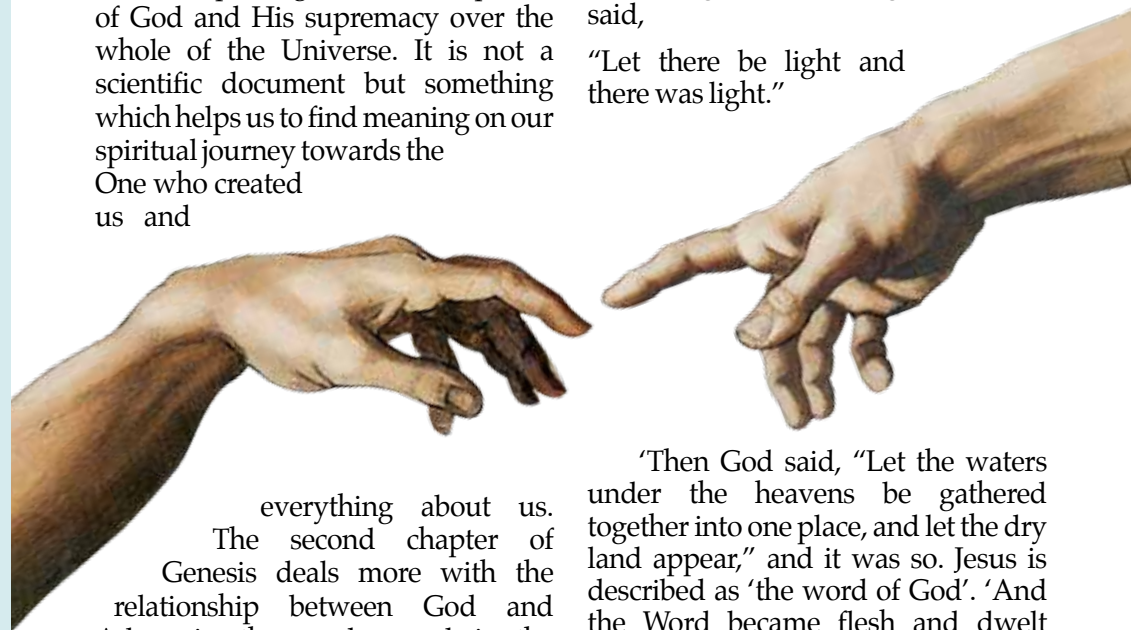
A talk on Creation for Youth Groups

Susan Rossi

The first account of Creation in Genesis is a statement of belief in the all-encompassing, creative power of God and His supremacy over the whole of the Universe. It is not a scientific document but something which helps us to find meaning on our spiritual journey towards the One who created us and

told about the powerful creativity of God's word, bringing into existence something out of nothing. 'Then God said,

"Let there be light and there was light."



everything about us. The second chapter of Genesis deals more with the relationship between God and Adam in the garden and is the beginning of the journey of mankind towards understanding God and the vital importance of His presence with us. This journey only ends in death.

In the first chapter of Genesis, we are

'Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear," and it was so. Jesus is described as 'the word of God'. 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' Just as the whole of Creation comes into being through the active powerful Word of God, the Word becomes flesh in the

person of Jesus at the Incarnation. John Duns Scotus believed that when God created mankind, He created thinking, sentient beings who would be able to respond to Jesus, the Word, and follow his teachings. In Genesis 1, verse 2, it says, 'And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.' All three persons of the Trinity were there at the creation of the Universe.

Another phrase which is repeated often in the Genesis account is, 'and God saw that it was good.' The Divine Creator looked at each part of His creation and saw that it was good; not parts of it but all of it. When He created mankind God saw that it was very good. That tells me that humanity and all of creation at the start was good.

'Francis believed that the Universe is the product of the highest creative power, the creativity of the transcendent God of Love.' God brings into being what did not exist and then, in love, lets it be itself. God is a good parent and gives us a chance to use His gifts and learn from our mistakes. Mankind is given care of the rest of Creation, which is a responsibility. God wants us to think about the repercussions of our actions.

Within each part of Creation is the Spirit of God, His DNA as Richard Rohr OFM calls it. Each part of Creation is dependent upon the other. In the Amazon jungle there is tiny flower which holds a possible treatment for cancer. The jungles and forests of the world provide homes

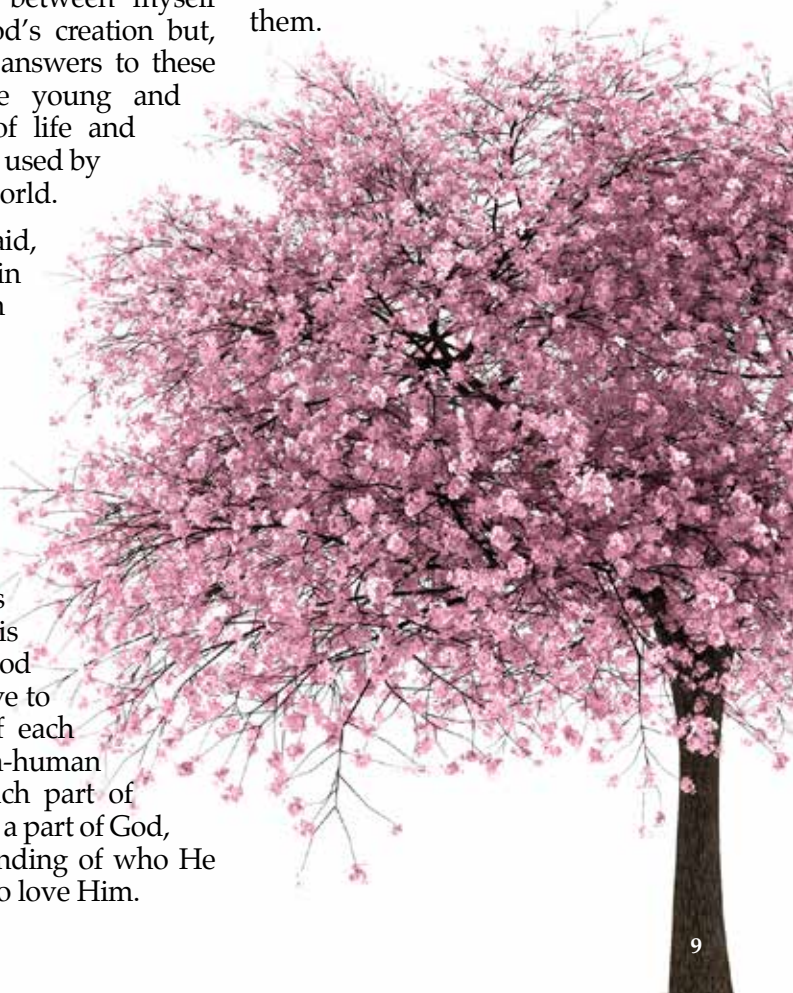
for indigenous people who are self-sufficient, as everything they need is there. These jungles may also contain foods or medicines or other sources of knowledge which are there for us to discover. And yet we destroy these places, to make money, but not to preserve the way of life of our brothers and sisters or the possible benefits which these areas contain. Our present lifestyle produces gases which increase the greenhouse effect, raising the global temperature, causing a rise in sea-levels. This has caused flooding in parts of Britain, for example The Fens. Recent tsunamis in the Far East have caused great destruction. In the Southern Hemisphere, the disappearance of islands has meant the loss of homes and livelihoods for the people who live on them. Francis would remind us that they are our brothers and sisters and infers that we should be caring for them.

When deciding how to grow the best crops, do we use pesticides which harm our brothers and sisters, the bees? The honey the bees make has lots of uses, many of them healing to humans. Manuka honey is used to pack wounds in hospitals to keep infection away and aid healing. When we overfish the seas so that the numbers of fish decrease drastically, do we do something about it or allow our swimming brothers and sisters to die out? How will that affect us? What do we do about the loss of an important part of the food chain? If we don't recycle our waste and simply add to the massive amount of landfill so that the earth becomes poisoned,

do we feel the pain of Mother Earth? That mother, created by God to nurture and feed us, will slowly die if we don't put into place strategies to protect her. The animal and bird kingdom has many beautiful species which are fast becoming extinct. Often, like in the case of the elephants, it is due to greed of poachers who kill these amazing creatures to sell the ivory tusks. Other people buy the ivory and the end product is the disappearance of beautiful creatures who adorn the world and do not harm us. As a Franciscan I am aware of the connection between myself and the rest of God's creation but, I do not have the answers to these problems. You are young and at the beginning of life and perhaps you will be used by God to rescue his world.

Saint Francis said, "Every creature in heaven and on earth and in the depths of the sea should give God praise and glory and honor and blessing." He could be telling us that we should enable our brothers and sisters to do this by being truly as God made them. We have to respect the gifts of each other and the non-human creation. Within each part of Creation we can see a part of God, giving us understanding of who He is and enabling us to love Him.

Father Daniel O'Leary tells a story about the creatures in the forest wanting to know who God is. They asked the cherry tree and THE CHERRY TREE BLOSSOMED! It became truly what it was meant to be. I had a greyhound called Lucca, who was unable to be anything but himself. When walking in the park, he always went towards the people who had addictions, like drugs or alcohol. He placed his long snout on their lap and looked at them lovingly until they responded. As I was at the end of the lead, he enabled me to meet and talk with them.



He was a canine missionary. His gift of compassion and care was his gift from the Creator. I'm sure many of you have pets who could teach you about love. I was watching a documentary about space the other day and the astronauts involved said that the pictures sent from the Hubble telescope filled them with awe and an immense respect for the creative mind behind the Universe. As I listened, I realized that, however much I thought I understood, my knowledge is tiny compared with the infinite wisdom of God.

To finish, Saint Francis would want us to journey with a light foot upon Mother Earth, a gentle attitude towards our brothers and sisters and an openness to finding hopeful and life-giving solutions to today's problems. If the people who live in the jungles and forests of the world are our brothers and sisters then we must put their well-being before material gain. If we create and use

nuclear weapons which destroy God's creation and bring misery, hardship and homelessness to humankind then, should we be doing it? When we make laws in order to govern our country, should we be thinking about the effects of these laws on people who are on the edge? Is a law as good as the effect it has on the least powerful? What do we do about homelessness in Glasgow and our other big cities? How does the solution respect the dignity of the people concerned?

To be a Franciscan in today's world is not easy but we have been given the resources within ourselves to respond. If each one of us lived in loving relationship with each other and with Creation, then the world would be a better place and Saint Francis would be dancing in heaven.



St Francis and Christian Piety in the Middle Ages

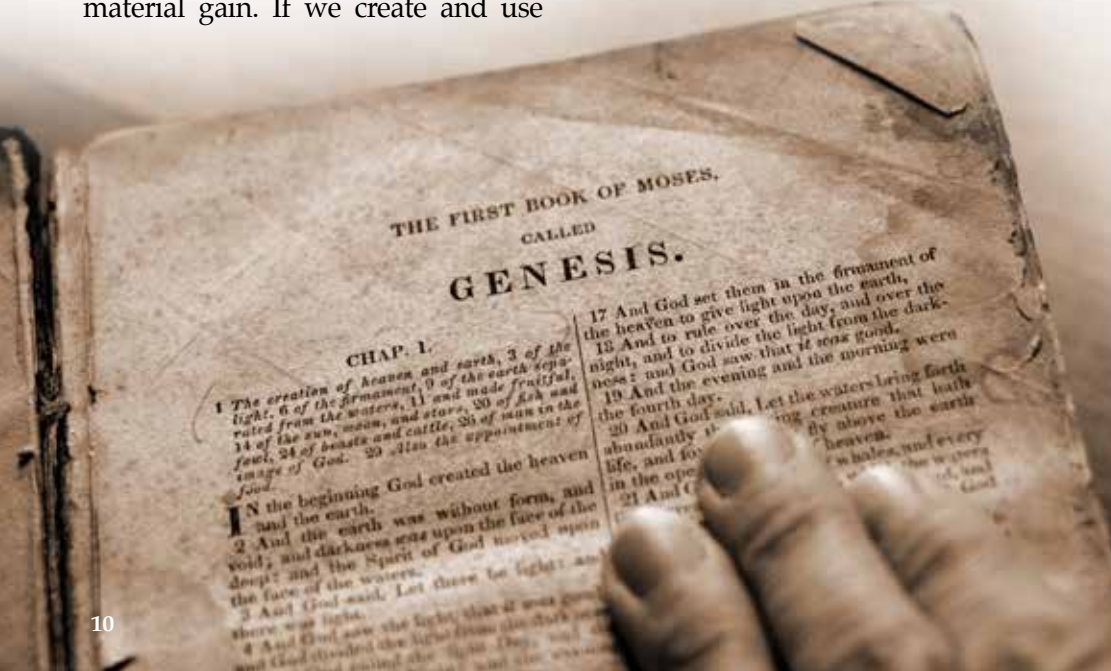
When toward the end of his life St Francis saw his friars moving ever further away from his ideals, he sadly resigned his authority in favour of men more gifted to rule than he. Yet he never ceased to exhort the friars to cling to the form of life which he believed had been revealed to him by the Lord Himself.

He did not want the brothers to follow the rule of St Benedict, St Augustine or any other rule. He admired and respected the faithful Benedictines and Augustinians who followed their rules but for Francis,

he and his brothers were to fulfil a new and specific role in the Church: to glorify God by "serving him in poverty and lowliness".

To understand this new point of view we have to examine briefly the spiritual attitudes of the early Middle-Ages.

When feudalism rose from the ruins of the devastated Roman Empire, there came into being a parallel concept of spirituality. The Church, in striving to fulfil her God-given task of calling people to salvation, adapted herself to the social order



of the time and followed the structural pattern of feudal society which had become her milieu. Early medieval piety was therefore closely associated with the concept of nobility. The idea of hierarchy and class distinctions held sway over the medieval mind. This is expressed in its concept of human society as a pyramid. Every vassal is bound to his lord in a fixed and rigid pattern within a general framework. So power and movement is from top to bottom. God, who is over both pope and emperor, is at the apex of the pyramid; the serf is at the base.

This created a problem for the medieval Church when the matter of the Incarnation had to be considered. How was it possible that He, whose position is at the very summit of creation, could descend to the lowest structure of society? So Anselm of Canterbury asked the question: *Cur Deus Homo?* Why did God become man? For the Incarnation seemed to contradict in its very essence the concept of the hierarchical fixed and stable order of the medieval mind.

Theological considerations, however, had little effect on the feudal mentality. Even the exterior forms of piety were affected by the ideals of chivalry. The Christian serves God as His vassal. His love for God is the expression not so much of filial tenderness as of feudal devotion to One Who is Lord and Master of all. So adoration takes on the forms of chivalry and is addressed in its terms. The medieval Christian contemplated the Incarnation of Christ, and also

His death on the cross. But the image of Christ in his mind is the majestic Christ, the Ruler of the world. The majestic bearing and the regal crown appear even in the image of the Crucified. *"Regnabit a ligno"* – *God shall reign from the cross* – is a clear echo from the early middle ages.

This medieval piety was expressed in the gorgeous display of processions. Not only the pomp and ceremony but also the solemn, measured step of the religious procession reflected in feudal concepts of rank and distance between higher and lower, between God and man. Love of elaborate ceremonial, of Byzantine splendour and formalism, also reflect qualities of medieval spirituality. In art, in grave stones, there is the attitude of the knight swearing fealty to his lord. Even devotion to Mary is feudal in spirit. She was loved as the ideal woman of chivalry, to be championed by valiant knights. The saints, too, were placed on a level far above that of the ordinary man, and were almost by definition of noble birth.

Into this scene comes Francis. He himself belonged to the new aristocracy of wealth. His father was a typical Italian cloth-merchant, part of the rising middle class. Certainly he was as military minded as any of his contemporaries. His language too, was the language of chivalry. He was the herald of the Great King, the knight who served his lovely Lady Poverty, with all the courtly gallantry of his age. His prayers, too, were often cast in the solemn forms of the liturgy. Yet into the midst of this strongly medieval and courtly

milieu, he introduced a new note – the *"sequi vestigia Christi"* – *to follow the footsteps of Christ*. Here the emphasis is on the personal nearness of Christ to man.

Francis was shaken to the depths of his soul when grace led him to realise how near God came to man in the Incarnation. He could never again see the Incarnation as merely an episode in the history of God's dealing with man. For him it was a revelation, a divine directive pointing out to him the way he was to travel on his journey to God. The characteristic of his piety is not formal veneration of the unreachable majesty of God, but a tenderly human weeping over the realisation that Divine Love is not loved.

So too, in his devotion to Mary. His attitude is no longer that of kneeling in homage to the Queen of heaven but an awareness of her as the poor little mother whose child was born in a stable. So he could write to St Clare, "I, Brother Francis, will follow our Lord Jesus and His most holy Mother in a life of poverty." It is not knightly service but close personal imitation of her humble life on earth.

Francis saw in poverty the safest and surest way to union with his Divine Master. This is the thinking that led to the crib at Greccio. Francis longed to concretise for everyone the tremendous reality of the Word made flesh, dwelling among us. In the mind of the poverello, the mystery of

the Incarnation is the mystery of God's nearness to His creatures.

If this way of literal following of Christ was new and strange to the contemporaries of Francis, it bore the unmistakable evidence of Divine approval. Had not God shown this way to Francis, giving it the seal of authenticity by signing his body with the five seals of the Stigmata. After the stigmata, Francis was the living proof to his contemporaries that God approved his way of life. This realisation brought about a genuine return to Gospel perfection, and the human Christ, the humble, suffering, Son of Man became the centre of this new kind of Christocentric spirituality.



A second letter to those wishing to learn Spiritual Reading

Dear Friend,

In my first letter, published in the last issue of Troubadour, I briefly outlined the distinction between spiritual reading and ordinary reading. Now I would like to mention certain attitudes that have to be developed if you are to become a spiritual reader.

Firstly, you have to learn to see not only the obvious in the text but its inner depth. You have to penetrate beneath the time bound formulas to the timeless truths behind these culturally and historically limited presentations. You have to bring a prayerful presence to the Word

behind the words which will lead you to proclaim "It is the Lord." Then you no longer desire to be anywhere else. You become content to dwell with the text in faith. Gradually becoming aware that in the most ordinary appearances, in the light of faith, God is speaking. Therefore you have to train your ears to hear what is being said by God behind surface manifestations that make no sense from a human perspective alone. Then you will no longer look ahead impatiently to the time when your expectations will be fulfilled. You will no longer look back nostalgically to the way things were. You will come to rejoice in the presence of the Master, hearing his voice, allowing him to affirm and challenge you.

Again you have to learn to give up control and allow the truth of who you are to emerge. You are nothing but a gift of God's love. In the first creation he gave you to yourself and in the re-creation He gives Himself to you. You are a finite gift to Someone infinitely greater, wiser, more loving than yourself. You have to gratefully accept the gifts God shares with you. You have to affirm your utter dependence on God, taking a grateful, receptive, rather

than an aggressive, manipulative stance towards the text. You must learn not to dominate but obey; not to criticise or condemn but allow the text to criticise you; not downgrade but savour each word. As a disciple you can only ask questions that will lead you to more profound depths. You must allow yourself to be formed by the Word of God, detached from all that might be a personal programming of the Word of God.

To achieve this you must learn to listen attentively. You must still the mind and grow in faithful attention to the Master even when there is darkness and dryness. Sometimes you might try to avoid being attentive to spiritual reading because you fear the implications of the Master's message or you are so involved with what you are doing that you cannot "let go" and allow the message to reveal itself to you. But gradually as you strive to overcome your needy, greedy love and desires, through the practice of daily dying to self-gratification, you will begin to see the text not as a dead letter but as a current message to be assimilated. You will then opt for repetition rather than constant newness and excitement,

savouring each message of the Beloved.

Another attitude to be acquired by you as a spiritual reader, is that you must stay patiently with the text whether you get good results or not. This patient dwelling with the text deepens your powers of concentration so that even in dryness and aridity you allow the Word of God to pierce the marrow of your being.

Ask yourself if you are developing these attitudes which will prepare you to co-operate with the graces God will grant you through His Word. The following questions will help you to see how far you still have to go to prepare yourself for spiritual reading.

Are you listening to God in faith or merely listening to your own expectations?

Are you present to this moment or are you locked in the past or the future?

Are you prepared to give up control and submit to being formed by God?

Are you able to listen to others or do your needs and desires control your attention?

Are you waiting in patient expectancy to meet the Lord and Master in the text?

Are you prepared to face your own limits and face the pain of being drawn out of your complacent living?

Are you open to new meaning and direction in your life?

Have you the patience to persevere with a text?

From this letter I hope you have come to see that to become a spiritual reader demands that you restructure your attitudes.

May God bless you and help you persevere.

St Antonine's Home

Providing great comfort, joy, happiness, love and mercy to the elderly.



A BRIEF HISTORY -

St. Antonine's Home for the Aged was established in 1971 in Alva Mission close to Pomeroy by Monsignor Marius Banks. The humble beginnings housed 6 elderly residents. With the increased demand for accommodation and care, the diocese of Dundee, KwaZulu Natal S.A., decided to build a larger Home for the elderly.

In 1983 the Home moved to Amakhasi Mission (Rural Area) under the leadership of Fr. John Berte with a great variety of residents. The majority of whom were very poor, sickly, destitute and needy. Great love and mercy, joy, comfort and happiness has been provided to the residents over the years. The highest respect for residents is provided by management, personnel and staff of St Antonine Home.



Monsignor Marius Banks



The Alva Mission close to Pomeroy

The current Home is run by the Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (FCSCJ) in fulfilling their charism, and the Board of Management.

OUR VISION

Senior Citizens receive quality and holistic care in a healing and stimulating environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Antonine's Home is Christ focused organisation providing an exciting home living atmosphere, care and service to older person

OBJECTIVES

- To support and extend the provision of quality and comfortable living conditions for older persons, to enhance

and restore their social, physical, emotional, spiritual and mental needs; improve and increase their health status, surroundings and general hygiene.

- Promote and advance family reconciliations, faith, charity, unity and fortify it.
- Watch over the members of our family, over those who care for older persons; above all, over those, who have been entrusted to our care; as well as those to whom we consecrate ourselves...
- We always ensure that human rights of the older person is promoted, protected and respected at all times; above all, to achieve a dignified, unified, but active-going, healthy and growing young older persons community family.

ACTIVITIES

- The Social Worker gives therapeutic sessions, individual counselling and group counselling.
- Hospital visit once a week and whenever there is a need.
- Visit physiotherapist once a month.
- To exercise in the premises.
- To ensure that they have a balanced diet.
- To have relaxation time, watching TV and reading newspapers.
- To ensure that spiritual life is maintained by providing church services.
- Monitoring service.
- Staff training.
- Networking through workshops and conferences.
- Provision and sharing of information.
- Leadership training.
- Advocacy with government and key stakeholders.
- Staff, Residents and Board of Management meetings.
- Out-reach programme.
- Administration work.



Part of the 2017 development, the new hall was built as a multipurpose. It is where all activities take place including the gym.



The opening of the new hall, which has become such an important part of our lives.



A real sense of community and sharing experiences has been established at St Antonine's.

DIFFERENT ACTIVITY GROUPS AT ST ANTONINE'S HOME

SKILLS GROUP

The skill group aims at encouraging our residents to rediscover and to share their talents and skills.

As a result the residents are involve in gardening, knitting and crocheting, sewing (traditional clothes), bead work, and making leather covers for books.



This purpose of our projects is therapeutic as well as sustainability. They help give our residents a sense of worth in addition to well-being.



School children came to entertain the old people and to give them therapeutic massages and some gifts.

ENTERTAINMENT & ACTIVITIES GROUP

To keep our residents relaxed, engaged and stress free, the facility provides opportunities for recreation activities. It also organises outings for the residents.

The entertainment group is in charge of organising recreation time in the home: socials, cultural days, and special day's e.g. Valentine's Day, birthdays Christmas day and etc. The picture shows one of the groups from Newcastle that came to entertain our Residents.

DAILY ACTIVITIES GROUPS

Influenced by Eden Alternative philosophy we continue to encourage the residents to participate actively in the life of the Home by doing the little they can. The main purpose behind this initiative is to eliminate Boredom, Loneliness, and Helplessness and to keep healthy.



We wish to make our residents feel that they are still important, contributing members of society. The residents feel helpful and this gives them ownership of 'their home.

SHOPPING AND OUTINGS

Our Senior Citizens were mothers and fathers in their respective homes, they were used in doing shopping so here we still give them allowance (Pocket money) which they use for shopping in outing days. Outings and meeting with new people make them feel connected with the community.

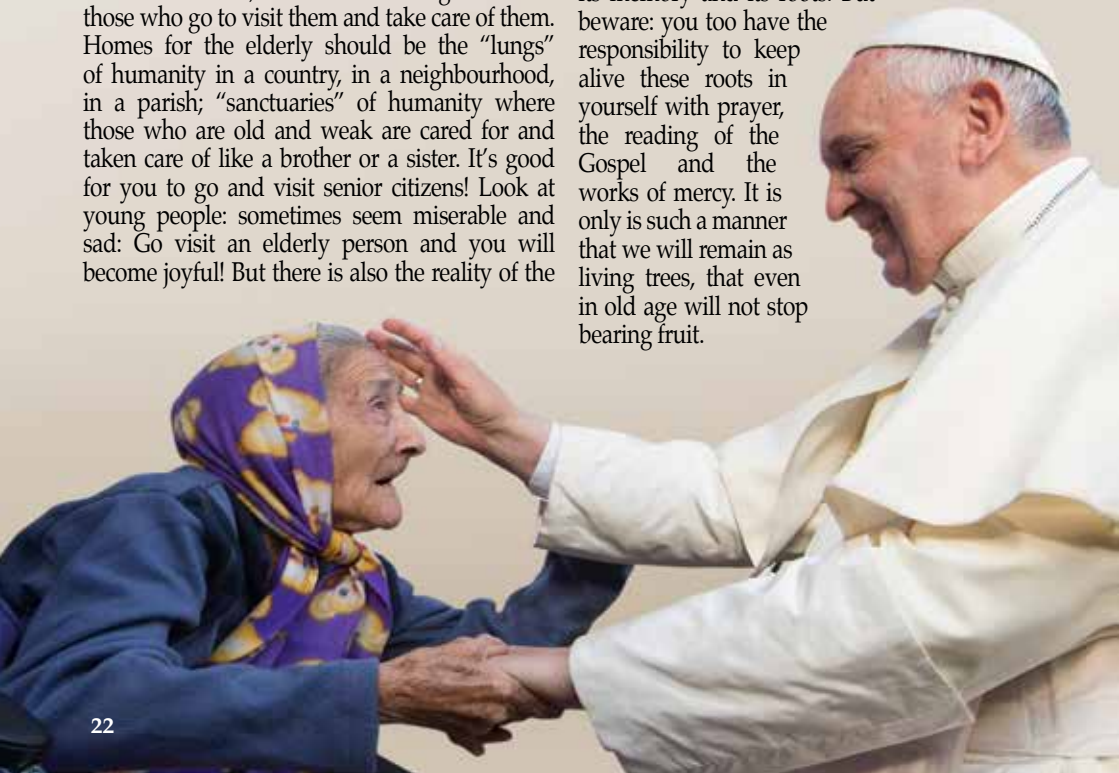
MAINTENANCE GROUP

The maintenance group keep our facility in good condition at all times. They also make sure that our garden is providing good nutrition to our family. This group is made of Residents who were involved in plumbing, electrical and general maintenance during their times. They give good advice to our maintenance staff. Recently we added Egg layers and broiler chickens. We also keep our garden ever green, though we have a challenge of water.

OLD AGE IS A TIME OF GRACE: POPE FRANCIS CALLS THE WORLD TO HONOUR THE ELDERLY

To Grandparents, who have been blessed to see their children's children (cf. Ps 128.6), to them are entrusted an even greater task: to convey the experience of life, the story of a family, the story of a community or even of a people; to share with simplicity their wisdom and the same faith which is the most precious legacy! Blessed are those families who have grandparents nearby! The grandfather is in a way twice a father and the grandmother is twice a mother. But it is not always the case that the elderly, the grandfather, grandmother has a family that can accommodate them or upon which they can count. So we welcome the houses for the elderly - so that they can truly be homes, not prisons! We hope that these homes will truly serve the interests of older persons and not the interests of someone else! There must never be institutions where the elderly are forgotten, hidden or neglected. I feel close to the many elderly people who live in these institutions, and I think with gratitude of those who go to visit them and take care of them. Homes for the elderly should be the "lungs" of humanity in a country, in a neighbourhood, in a parish; "sanctuaries" of humanity where those who are old and weak are cared for and taken care of like a brother or a sister. It's good for you to go and visit senior citizens! Look at young people: sometimes seem miserable and sad: Go visit an elderly person and you will become joyful! But there is also the reality of the

abandonment of the elderly: how many times we discard older people with attitudes that are akin to a hidden form of euthanasia! The culture of discarding human beings hurts our world. We discard children, young people and older people under the pretence of maintaining a "balanced", economic system the centre of which is no longer the human person, but money. We are all called to counter this culture of poisonous waste! We Christians, together with all people of good will, are called to patiently build a more diverse, more welcoming, more humane, more inclusive society that does not need to discard the weak in body and mind. On the contrary we need a society which measures its success on how the weak are cared for. As Christians and as citizens, we are called to envision, with imagination and wisdom, ways of dealing with this challenge. A people who do not take care for grandparents, does not treat them well has no future: such a people loses its memory and its roots. But beware: you too have the responsibility to keep alive these roots in yourself with prayer, the reading of the Gospel and the works of mercy. It is only in such a manner that we will remain as living trees, that even in old age will not stop bearing fruit.



COLOURING PAGE

Colour this page as neatly and brightly as you can. HAVE FUN!



Open your heart to others.

The Leaf



I asked the leaf whether it was frightened because it was Autumn and the other leaves were falling.

The leaf told me, "No. During the Spring and Summer I was completely alive.

I worked hard to help nourish the tree, and now much of me is in the tree.

I am not limited by this form, I am also the whole tree, and when I go back to the soil, I will continue to nourish the tree.

So I don't worry at all.

As I leave this branch and float to the ground, I will wave to the tree and tell her,

"I will see you again very soon."