



Christmas Tree in the Sanctuary



# *The Franciscan*

Advent & Christmas 2010  
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

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## Foreword

We have managed to produce four issues this year, instead of the usual three – many thanks to all the contributors who have made this possible by submitting quality articles throughout the year. Many people congratulate me on *The Franciscan*, but an editor is only as good as the submissions she receives. Please keep up the good work next year – your efforts are greatly appreciated by our readers. And new contributors are always welcome!

Our thanks must also go to Signmart Express for the high quality of the printing, which enhances our printed version without costing us a cent, as Dave Tweedley donates paper, printing and collation.

**Jill Daugherty, Editor**

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## From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



### **Advent – why wait?**

Waiting is not something most of us do easily – our frustrations at waiting begin in childhood and are hard to outgrow. The society we live in exacerbates, if not encourages, this frustration with waiting, with its covert and, more often than not, blatantly overt message of suggesting that we **MUST** have what we want and that we must demand to have it **NOW!** Surely waiting is an increasingly strange phenomenon.

Which then begs the question – why does the Church still have Advent, a season of four weeks dedicated to **WAITING?**

What are we to do during this period of waiting? The answer lies in a renewed vision of Advent, where the focus of the waiting rests, not in frustration, but in **STILLNESS**. In an active waiting in the present. In a waiting that has nothing to do with frenzied anticipation, but an embracing of the present.

If we want to appreciate Advent fully, we need to re-learn how to wait, to rediscover the art of savouring the future, of staying in the present and of finding meaning in the act of waiting – active internal waiting that knits together a new spiritual life. To become fully present, right now. Many people speak of feeling a deep anti-climax on Christmas Day, when that long-anticipated day does not live up to expectations. Often the reason for this is that we live forever in the future so that, when the future becomes the present, we are ill-equipped to deal with it and have lost the ability to be fully present, right now.

One of the many reasons why we wait in Advent is so that we can hone our skills of being joyfully and fully present **now**. After a month of doing this, Christmas Day can gain a depth and meaning that would otherwise fly past in a whirl of presents and mince pies. Such deep attention to the present cannot help but transform our lives as we learn – or relearn as the case may be – how to live deeply and truly in the present moment, so that we are content to linger in our lives as they are now and not be forever looking forwards, striving onwards to the next goal.

The meaning is in the waiting!!

Have a "waitful" Advent and a Christ-filled Christmas  
**Venerable Timothy Lowes**



**The Advent Wreath – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent**

### **From the Parish Registers**

#### **Faithfully departed**

<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>
17 Oct 2010	John Corbett
27 Oct 2010	Maureen Ketjen

**Jon-Reece Evans has been appointment as the Youth Chaplin and will begin in January 2011.**

**OBITUARY**

**Gloria Smith, Priest and  
Doctor of Literature & Philosophy**

Gloria Smith, who died on 2 June at the age of 63, had three careers: secretary, university lecturer and priest, as well as being a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. Her packed memorial service in Gonubie paid tribute to the affection in which she and her husband Ed, also a priest, are held.

Gloria entered the world of work directly after Matric, and held secretarial posts in her home town of Nigel and elsewhere in Gauteng. Having met and married Ed, who was like her at that time a member of the Baptist Church, and who was a telecommunications expert, Gloria stayed at home to raise their two children. When Susan and David had started school, Gloria returned to study through Unisa and obtained her BA, majoring in English and Biblical Studies, BA Honours, MA and finally in 1997 her D Litt & Phil. By that time she had been for some years a lecturer at Vista University, where she was on the staff from 1987 to 2001. Her doctoral thesis was cross-disciplinary, in the departments of English and Church History, and focussed on Lancelot Andrewes, the early 17<sup>th</sup> century priest and religious writer.

The Smiths joined the Anglican Church in 1986, and immediately became involved in lay ministry. In 1992 they were both ordained deacons, and in 1996 were both ordained priests, serving in a self-supporting capacity in Waterkloof parish, Pretoria Diocese.

On retiring from their lecturing posts, Gloria and Ed moved to East London, where Ed was Priest-in-Charge of All Saints, with Gloria as his assistant, from January 2002 until their retirement to Gonubie at the end of 2003. Despite her failing health, and often being in great pain, Gloria continued to read and discuss challenging theological books.

We give thanks for her life. Prayers are asked for her husband Ed, for Susan, David and the grandchildren.

***Umbuliso August-September 2010***  
**Submitted by Vivienne Bam**

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## **The Meaning of Christmas**

And so the month of December has arrived. It's the month when we begin to think of lazy summer days spent in the sun, of holidays, and of recharging our worn-out batteries. But it's also a very crazy month when we begin to look forward to Christmas and presents, Christmas trees and tinsel, mince pies and eggnog (if you have a more traditional outlook), or perhaps biltong and beer (if you don't). We start dusting off the Christmas candles and festive ornaments, check that the Christmas lights still work, hang up the mistletoe, go shopping for Christmas presents for our loved ones, hang up advent calendars for our children (and for the child within), put up the Christmas tree and gather together to decorate it, get the old favourite Christmas stories off the bookshelves, chestnuts over an open fire, and have images of sugarplum fairies dancing in our heads. It's a time when the more industrious amongst us start frantically baking up a storm, in preparation for the hordes descending upon us for what is ultimately a time for family and loved ones.

As you can see, I love Christmas, and everything it entails. I'm not very good at getting prepared in time, and often run around like a mad thing at the last minute, trying to get everything done, but I'm like a kid around this time of the year. I start getting excited as soon as the weather warms up enough to start wearing t-shirts and summer dresses, when the open-toed sandals come out of storage, and it becomes mandatory to paint our toenails. And that's somewhere in September! I love the smell of real pine needles, and the sound of Christmas carols on the radio. I love the cheesy Christmas movies on TV, and the expectation of things to come.

But it's easy to become so wrapped up in the commercial trappings of Christmas that we forget what the real meaning of Christmas is. I'm not saying that all these other things are meaningless or unimportant. They give us joy, and it's the small things in life that make life worth living. That's as it should be. But we should also remember the most important gift of all, a gift that God gave us more than 2000 years ago. The gift of his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, who was sent down to earth as a baby, and to grow up as a man, to save us all, from ourselves.

This world must have been a very scary place for Christians back then, although they weren't called Christians, because Christ hadn't been born yet. The idea of repentance and redemption hadn't been created, and it was so easy to sin (as it is now, being the fallible creatures that we are), yet so hard to make amends with God and to ensure a place in Heaven. God destroyed the world, and the people in it, with the flood when he saw that only one family out of so many had managed to remain faithful to Him. He swore that he wouldn't do it again, and gave us the rainbow as a physical sign of that promise. But He did destroy Sodom and Gomorrah when the people there got out of hand and refused to repent of their sinful ways. God must have gotten tired of constantly having to destroy His own creation, because of our selfishness and short-sightedness, and He must have foreseen how many more times He would have to do it throughout the ages, and I believe THAT is why He decided to send Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins, so that we could have a constant reminder of His incredible love for us, and be able to simply ask for forgiveness, if that is what our hearts truly desire, and we'd receive it instantly. No more burnt offerings. No more sacrifices. No more chastisements. We'd simply be able to ask, and receive, because Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us, on our behalf.

And it couldn't have been easy for Him either. Yes, He's God, but He was born as a man, and had most of the earthly experiences that we've had. He had a family, and friends, that He loved. He had a job as a carpenter, before God called him to His ministry. He had a life. And within a matter of three years, he went from having to leave that life and everything He loved, to having to die on the cross for our sins. He was a year younger than I am now! That's incredible to me, and I have a tough time wrapping my mind around it. He was a man, and it must have been an incredible mental anguish and physical torture for Him to have to endure all that He did... for us. Because He loves us.

One could argue that we would die for our own children, so therefore it can't have been all that hard for Christ to die for us, when we are His children. However, one must remember that although God is ONE God, He is also made up of three parts, functioning completely separately from each other. They are THREE in ONE. And therefore, Christ who was on

earth here with us, mankind, wasn't our Father. Our Father was still in Heaven. Our saviour, Jesus Christ, was on earth with us, and He must have really struggled with it. He knew what He had to do, what He was put here for, but He was in an earthly body with earthly thoughts and feelings, and all I can say is that He must REALLY love us to have endured all that pain and ridicule, for us.

Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of all. He gave us the very real possibility of eternal life. He made the practical aspects of talking to God so much easier by becoming our very own personal Intercessor. Before then, only a very select few could hope to talk to God. He brought us closer to God, making God more accessible, and allowed us the opportunity to develop a very real, very close relationship with God. Jesus also saved us from ourselves. And He gave His life for us, so that we might live. He DIED so that we might LIVE! Isn't that amazing???

And what do we do with this gift of life that we've been given? Do we appreciate every second of life that we've been given? Do we praise God and show him that we love Him every minute of every day? Do we do our utmost to discover what our individual purpose is and go out of our way to fulfil that purpose? Do we practise God's unconditional love on each other and allow His light to shine through us? Only you can answer these very personal questions for yourselves, and decide if there's anything you want to do about it.

But as we enter the third week of Advent, I lay a challenge before you, a challenge that I do my very best to take up as well, never fear. Because I too am as fallible as they come, and have no reason to think that I'm any better than any of you who might be reading this. I'm a sinner, and I have to struggle between what I want, and what God wants, every day. I have a temper, and I'm impatient, and I'm intolerant, and I'm a loudmouth, and I often put my foot in my mouth without even realising it, and so many other things besides. But I love God, with all my heart, and I WANT to follow Him, and to make Him happy. It's not always easy, but the trick is to never give up. Keep on trying. Keep on looking up. Keep on praying. Keep on waking up each morning with a good intention in your heart.



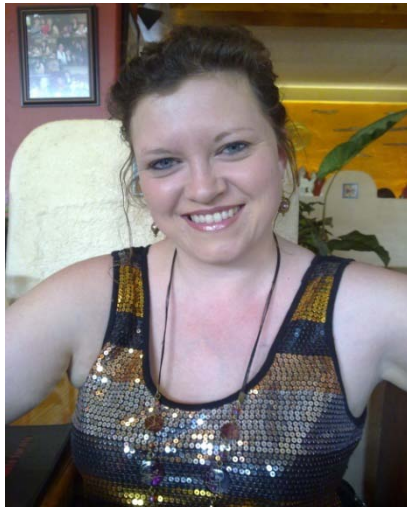
So I challenge you this festive season to do just that. Keep the REAL meaning of Christmas foremost in your minds and hearts these next three weeks, and practice God's love on each other. Be charitable, in all its intrinsic meanings, be loving, be tolerant, be kind, be infinitely patient, as hard as that might be sometimes, and don't ever give up. Don't beat yourselves up if you don't win the battle every single day, because God loves us anyway. He will be pleased just to see how hard we are trying to please Him, to show Him just how much we love Him, and that we appreciate the incredible sacrifice He made for us 2010 years ago. Just don't every stop trying.

Love your family, whether they are your blood family of a husband, wife, child, parent, grandparent, sibling and others. Or a family of kinship and emotional bonds that have come about out of mutual need and necessity. Or even the family of St. Francis, and the greater family of God's children. Everyone matters, and no one should be disqualified because they don't fit into our idea of what the "perfect" family or the "perfect Christian" should be. There's no such thing as "perfect", except in Heaven. Each of us has something to learn, and something to contribute. And there's no time like the present to perfect what needs perfecting, and to change what needs changing. It'll all be worth it in the end. Why? Because... Family Matters!

With love, and the hope of God's richest blessings on your lives this festive season,

**Theresa Innes**  
Family Matters Co-ordinator

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## God Said NO!

I asked God to take away my habit.

God said, No.

It is not for me to take away,

But for you to give it up...

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.

God said, No.

His spirit is whole, his body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience.

God said, No.

Patience is a by-product of tribulations;

It isn't granted, it is learned.

I asked God to give me happiness.

God said, No.

I give you blessings;

Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain.

God said, No.

Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares

And brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow.

God said, No,

You must grow on your own,

But I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked God for all things

That I might enjoy life.

God said, No.

I will give you life,

So that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me LOVE others, as much as He loves me.

God said... Ahhhh,

Finally you have the idea.

**Submitted by Sheila Cave**

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## **What is the Church for?**

On 23 November we had the opportunity of interacting with the Rev Stephen Lyon, the Secretary of the Church of England's Partnership for World Mission, who was visiting our Archdeaconry. The experience was indeed a divine one. He asked us to answer the above question, and led us to a startling conclusion.

Rev Stephen's demeanour, as well as his depth of understanding of human nature and the workings of the Church, drew out the essence of our participation in the activities of our various congregations. He did not speak at us nor to us, rather, he posed the above question and encouraged us to talk to one another about it. His process sought our input, which led to his summary and the discussion about what had emerged.

The process he used and the essence he drew from the assembled congregations from different parishes clearly exposed the inward focus of even our "good works". He pointed out the danger of the Church being seen as an exclusive "club". He explained that the often mentioned aspect of fellowship in the church was not for personal comfort.

Most importantly, he drew attention to the attitude towards those who come to church but are not in the club. Even to those who do not come to church. He also emphasised the fact that most good works listed in our responses are the result of the actions of a few groups, and that what is most often ignored or unknown is the work individuals do daily in the real world. We often do not know the occupations and influence of our fellow parishioners in their daily lives – from Monday to Saturday. These people could be role models, but their potential is often unknown to the Church.

He stressed the fact that the Sunday service was a process of refreshing, reinforcing and structurally assisting individuals to reaffirm their faith and willingness to follow Jesus' example. Quoting as he did from Jesus' pronouncement in the temple after reading Isaiah ( Luke 4: 17-19,21), Rev Stephen led us all to realise that our role in our daily lives is to help the needy and build reconciliation. (From Monday to Saturday.)

He took us through the Eucharistic service – central to our worship – and pointed out that the personal cleansing, reaffirmation and finally commitment to live a life of Christ were absent when it becomes a mechanical ritual – he challenged us to reflect on the words and passages in order to achieve the refreshment of the service. He pointed out the powerful aspects of “Love the Lord your God [...] and your neighbour”, the thoughtful confession, seeking cleansing, the importance of the recitation of the Creed to draw us, as a body and as individuals, to the basis of our particular worship of God - Christianity. He emphasised that each Sunday we commit ourselves to become “a living sacrifice” to go out and serve as He had done.

What he did for us was to say: “Stop looking for comfort on a Sunday, so that you can go out to live a self-focused life the rest of the week.” He said rather: “On a Sunday, cleanse yourself, and reaffirm your faith, vowing to make a personal sacrifice to live and work as Jesus did, each day, in your family and life in all aspects of the community.”

What went through my mind was that, after the Collect for Purity, the Penitence, the exhortation “Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbour”, the Creed, and finally the Commitment to being a Living Sacrifice, we as a congregation should pause in silence and each individually reflect, and even note down how each of these acts of worship can become a focus of our lives in our homes, work and environment. The role of the president would, in my book, be to manage the process making time for reflection and encourage the congregation to take stock and resolve these aspects, as an intrinsic part of the service.

The answer to Rev Stephen’s question may well have emerged as “Live the Eucharist”.

Thank you, Fr Stephen, for opening our eyes to the opportunities given us by seeking the import of the content of the Eucharist, and to our responsibility to absorb the meanings of our Sunday worship so as to empower us to become, in our small way, like Christ in our interaction with others.

Hank Doeg

## PARISH RETREAT 2010

The Parish Retreat was held from 22 to 24 October, at St Benedict's, Rosettenville. We met at St Francis on the Friday afternoon, were designated to our drivers and left shortly before 3pm. We took a different route from that of last year and arrived in good time for tea, a lot quicker than last year when we arrived not long before supper! The moment I walked through the entrance gates I felt myself relax and start absorbing the atmosphere of the place. It was the beginning of a weekend when we could forget everything and concentrate on our relationship with God.

Silence was observed almost immediately. After settling into "our home" for the weekend, we had a tasty supper and went into our first session. There were some people who were not from St Francis and a few who were on Retreat for the first time. It was lovely to have a whole family there as well. Father Tim made all of us feel comfortable by saying that the weekend was for us to achieve whatever we had come for, that we were not to feel rigidly bound to the programme and hopefully we would all benefit from the Retreat.

The Morning and Evening Offices were said on a daily basis and each day ended with the Compline. We had a special prayer which we said at the beginning of each session. On Sunday we had Mass accompanied by the nuns (of the Order of the Holy Paraclete), who were also present at our sessions and of course at mealtimes. It was sad to see that their numbers had dwindled from five (last year) to just three. I can't speak for the other people on the weekend, but I particularly enjoyed the regular ringing of the bell announcing mealtimes and the various services in the Chapel. The meals as always were delicious, as were the morning and afternoon teas. It was a real treat not to have to think about cooking and cleaning up.

Tim taught us about four icons – *God's call to Abraham*, the Russian icon *A Scene from the Nativity*, *The Mother of God of the Sign* and *The Angel of the Lord Appearing to the Shepherds*. Each had a fascinating story and theme and the sessions were interesting and informative.

Unfortunately Tim and Nina had to leave early. It was a great pity because I am certain Tim would have enjoyed the interesting

feedback session we had on the Sunday morning. Everyone had something to say and, even though we had all been through the same routine and lessons, each person's feedback was different and each had experienced a different outcome. We all felt we had learnt and gained something from the weekend.

St Benedict's will always be a special place for me and I hope we continue having this annual Retreat. I always return feeling refreshed and ready to face the World again. It is a break which every person should experience.

THANK YOU TIM!

Linda Lewis



Russian Icon: *Mother of God of the Sign*, see [www.iconexplained.com/iec/iec\\_icons\\_mother\\_of\\_god\\_of\\_the\\_sign](http://www.iconexplained.com/iec/iec_icons_mother_of_god_of_the_sign)

(Not the one used at the Retreat, but similar to it)

## **A Tribute to Heather Napier, Children's Church superintendent**

I would like to pay tribute to an unsung heroine. In his thank-you speech, Father Timothy referred to Heather Napier as an example of a superhero and I have decided to follow that metaphor in my tribute to her. When we think of someone like Wonder Woman, we are presented with qualities such as *Super Strength*, the ability to fly, courage and the *lasso of truth* she possesses.

I found the above quotation in a study as I researched Superheroes on the Internet:

Although the lure of the superhero who can leap tall buildings in a single bound certainly exists, most children said they admired their heroes because they were nice, helpful, and understanding (38%), all qualities highly valued for children in forming good self esteem. (A *Media Scope Survey and Literary Review* by Kristin J. Anderson)

The children also said role models were appreciated for their generosity, their understanding, and for being there and humour was a MUST. The other interesting fact is that children identify more with someone they know than a television character or celebrity!

I thought that Heather fits all these categories as a role model, not just for children but for us adults as well. She is super-generous with her talents and her time and few grasp just how much she sacrificed over the last four years (many, many times I found her beavering away in the dungeon or the classrooms or over the photocopier preparing for Sundays and services.)

She is "nice" – I hate that word but it comes from the study I was using – I will rather say she is kind, honest and very genuine. Heather will not be false and one knows where one stands with her, but she does it with love and kindness.

As a friend, I have experienced one of her great qualities – the gift of listening and understanding when one shares with her. I am certain the children and teachers found this quality to be true also. As for sense of humour, Heather is one of the funniest people I know. She has this dry and very intelligent humour as we heard in the joke she told in her farewell speech on Sunday. Whenever I receive anything from her via email, I know it will have me chuckling for hours. But Heather's humour is never at the expense of others.

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I also mention the “lasso of truth” All who know her will testify to her integrity and her ability to stand firmly for what she believes. She is a wonderful mother and wife as well and she certainly does have the ability to fly – from choir to ballet, to school, to church, to Bible study....

Apart from being a mom, wife, friend and a Children’s Church “superintendent”, Heather is a nursing sister and has the most stunning voice. She is also super organized and unflappable. Her resignation will leave a chasm in the children’s church but I do pray that God will raise up the right person to step into her role. Thank you Heather from all of us at St Francis for being a sterling role model to the seedlings in our church. You will probably never know how your “seeds” come to fruit, but know that your part was so valuable.

P.S. Heather comes from a strong Methodist background and I believe that is part of why she was so successful in the Children’s Church. I believe we Anglicans can learn a lot from the way they educate their children in scriptural things!

**Terry Brauer**

### **PRAYER OF THANKS**

Our Father in heaven, dear Lord  
In my prayer I would love to thank all the people  
Who are responsible for the upbringing of all of us as your children.  
In particular, we wish to thank the following people:  
Fr Timothy Lowes, our Sunday School teachers,  
Our school principals, our teachers at school,  
My karate instructor and all other instructors  
For our cultural activities and sport,  
My Grandmother.  
And most of all special thanks to all of our parents  
Who unselfishly look after us  
And teach us good manners.  
Our Lord God, I truly thank these people,  
And ask you to give them strength during their difficult time  
In educating us and raising us in Christian homes.  
In the name of Jesus,  
Amen! Nkosi Emmanuel.

**Kgomotso Orban, aged 9 years**



## God is Great

On 10 April 2010, on our way home from our holiday at the South Coast, we were involved in a nasty accident with our Toyota Fortuner and our Jurgens Exclusive Caravan.

We had just passed through the de Hoek Toll Plaza near Heidelberg. The country in that area is very hilly. I accelerated on a steep ascent, but probably forgot to lift my foot as we crested the rise. The caravan began to fishtail badly. All the occupants of the car (Rodney, my grandchildren, Stuart and Courtney, and one of their friends, Adam) began urging me to slow down, but by then the caravan's sway had become excessive. When I applied breaks, the car began to roll to the left. The caravan broke away from the car and rolled to the right. The vehicles landed on the left and right verges, on opposite sides of the double highway. That no other vehicle was involved in the accident is one of the miracles of God that day.

The Fortuner rolled several times, and landed on its roof (as did the caravan). Rodney and I were wearing our seatbelts and found ourselves hanging like 'vinkies' in them. I was unable to undo my seatbelt, to see how the children were. I could hear Stuart shouting for someone to stop and help us, and Adam and Courtney crying. Stuart (aged 14) had braced himself behind the driver's seat when he felt the car begin its roll. He was unharmed, climbed out the car and took control of the situation. Besides calling for help, he unpacked the luggage from the boot of the car, and helped both Adam and Courtney. The latter had a bad cut on his left foot. Stuart grabbed a clean T-shirt from his bag, wrapped it around Courtney's foot and told him to put pressure on it to staunch the bleeding. Adam had been thrown from the car and landed on his knees, which were very bruised, but not broken – another miracle of that day. I give thanks to God for the maturity shown by Stuart in a crisis situation.

Someone, who would not give his name, had stopped to help us. He undid my seatbelt, and I crawled out backwards. I suppose I was in shock. I sat on the luggage for a short while, and had a sip of water. In the meantime, the car had been righted. I went to see how Rodney was. What a shock I got! His hand had been crushed in the

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accident, and looked like mince meat. I thought, 'My poor husband. He is going to lose that hand.' Then I sent up an arrow prayer, 'Please, Lord, save Rodney's hand.'

The ambulances came. I felt I had to go with the children to the Suikersbosch Rand Clinic, as there was no other adult to do so. I found out later that Rodney had been taken to Alberton Union Hospital. Michael, my step-son arrived, and took me to that hospital to find out how Rodney was doing. The ICU sister told me that his head injury was not serious, and joy of joys, that the doctors said they could save Rodney's hand. I regard that as another miracle which God performed through the doctors.

It has been a long road to recovery, but Rodney is doing very well indeed, and I finally feel like a 'normal' person again.

We give thanks and praise to God for His hand of protection over us over the past eight months.

**Sheila Cave**



**Flowers on Easter Sunday 2010**

## **FLOWERS FOR ST. FRANCIS**

Flowers in the Bible are symbols of life and beauty. They are used to convey messages of God's comfort, as well as messages of the perishable nature of man. In general, Biblical references use flowers as analogies to help the reader picture the textual concept that the scripture is communicating.

One of the most well known New Testament references to flowers is in Matthew 6: 28-29, which compares the care God shows in providing for the lilies with the care God shows in providing for his people – saying that if God cares that much for a flower that will perish in a day, how much more will he care for his people.

At St. Francis we have a tradition of having fresh flowers at the altar every week, except during Lent and Advent. The flowers may be seen as a reflection of all God's care and love for us. For Christmas and for Easter we celebrate God's glory with an abundance of flowers. We have a very special flower team at St. Francis, who willingly give their time and generously provide the flowers every Sunday and I would like to thank each one for their dedication and commitment. I know that the congregations appreciate the beauty of the arrangements and the care and thought that goes into them. Thank you also to the parishioners who generously contribute to the costs of the Christmas and Easter flowers.

During the year we have invited parishioners to remember their loved ones or to celebrate special occasions by donating the flowers for a specific Sunday. Many thanks to those who have done so this year.

Please contact me on 012 460 6516 or 082 683 5680 if you would like to mark a special day in 2011.

**Jerice Doeg**

## Café Cloister

When we renovated the church hall a few years back, Colette Donkin and I felt that God was calling us to open a small coffee shop serving inexpensive meals in a Christian atmosphere and so Café Cloister came about. Over the last three years we have served inexpensive meals on a Tuesday and coffee and croissants or muffins on Sunday after church.

It is a place where the Tuesday morning Bible Study Group gather for lunch, others come along after Tuesday Forum, and others just come. We have our regulars who only miss if they're sick or out of town and, when Megan Winn was still Youth Pastor, she used to often meet with other youth leaders there. During the World Cup, we served food from a different country every week and, at the end of every year, we close with a Christmas lunch.

I have run the coffee shop since its inception and have really enjoyed doing that. Some days it is very quiet and some days very busy, but it's good to feel that in some small way you are serving the people of God and making their day more enjoyable. However, I feel my time is now up and God is calling me to different things.

SO THIS IS A CHALLENGE FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER. It will be up to you to decide what you want to do. You may want to just run the Sunday coffee shop, which means buying muffins or croissants and setting up and serving the coffee - you could organise a roster to serve. You may want to continue with the Tuesday lunches, or even run it more often in a different way. Over the last few months I have had people ask me to supply coffee and eats for meetings. I have often thought it would be a good idea to have a Sunday lunch once a month.

Whatever you do, Café Cloister can fill a big part in the social fabric of St Francis. Maybe someone would like to look at it as a way to make a small income - my intention has been to break even, but I have nevertheless made some profit, which I usually donate to a feeding scheme. If you feel God is calling you to this ministry, please speak to me.

**Heatherlynn Lewis**

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## **ST ANNE'S EQUESTRIA**

The parish church of St Anne's was started a few years ago by a small community of Anglicans in Pretoria East. It was originally called Willow Glen and led by the Rev Vernon Foster, who was then attached to the parish of Corpus Christi. Services were held at Willow Haven Retirement Centre and later at Willow Ridge High School.

The parishioners of All Saints Silverton joined us when their Church was sold, and we became the Mission Parish of St Anne's Equestria, with the Rev Alan O'Brien in charge, who was a Deacon at the time.

The construction of our new church commenced in 2009 and was completed recently. It is situated in Stellenberg Road, Equestria. The new church was consecrated on 24 October by the Right Rev Bishop Jo Seoka. However, we continue to hold our services at Willow Ridge High School until all things are finalised.

Presently we have the Venerable Timothy Lowes as our Rector, while the Rev Julian Kok and the Rev Danny Adonis also conduct services.

**Jill North, Secretary of St Anne's**



## HYMNS FROM MY CHILDHOOD

My acquaintance with hymns goes back to my early childhood. The timid little boy in the front row at school assemblies speedily memorised the words of the hymns when the fearsome principal threatened that anyone who didn't join in the singing would have to perform a solo before the entire school. Today I remember not only the words of those hymns, but also my varied reactions to them.

I was little and didn't know a big word like "condescend", but somehow I sensed the condescension and so I hated hymns that patted me on the head. In effect, this was any hymn that contained the word "little". Top of my hate list was "Little drops of water, little grains of sand," with its endless repetition of the word. Another was "There's a Friend for little children/ Above the bright blue sky." I didn't mind the offer of friendship so much, but later in the hymn came the suggestion of an alternative home for little children and I couldn't see much wrong with the one my parents provided. And then there was "Now the day is over" with its petition "Grant to little children/ Visions bright of Thee."

This brings me to my second reaction, astonishment. The first cause of the astonishment was that we could sing "Now the day is over/ Night is drawing nigh" first thing in the morning. Years later, when I was a teacher in Swaziland I had the same out-of-world experience when a morning assembly opened with "The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended/ The darkness falls at thy behest." I looked around me, but neither my colleagues on the stage nor the pupils ranged in front of us batted an eyelid. Equally bewildering, I remember, was the apparent obsession with sailors. Linked with the little children already referred to was "Guard the sailors tossing/ On the deep blue sea", while "Eternal Father, strong to save" with its stirring chorus "Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee/ For those in peril on the sea" was a great favourite. Years later when I sang it on a Union Castle liner en route to England, it seemed more appropriate, if somewhat indiscrete.

One hymn produced acute embarrassment. From surreptitiously reading my elder sister's Mills and Boons, I knew that "lover" was a risqué word and that "bosom" was quite unspeakable. How, then, could solemn-faced teachers expect us little children to sing "Jesu, Lover of my soul/ Let me to thy bosom fly."? In adulthood I was to

learn that the intimate imagery of this hymn so disturbed Victorian susceptibilities that it was admitted to the Wesleyan Hymnbook only sixty years after Charles Wesley wrote it.

And then there is incomprehension. Along with scores of other young hymn singers, I couldn't figure why any green hill should require a city wall. What were the "nearer waters" of the Most Embarrassing hymn and why did the saints cast down their golden crowns around a glassy sea? If I'd read *Revelation* I would have known, but then my sister didn't try to hide her *Book of Revelation* from me. Apart from mysterious imagery, I also encountered mysterious syntax that obscured meaning. In "Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing", I thought for a long time that "Thanks for mercies past receive" must be "past received", i.e. received in the past. It was ages before it dawned on me that this was a truly Miltonic sentence where meaning was dependent on a complete rearrangement of the words: Receive thanks for past mercies.

Condescension, perplexity, embarrassment, incomprehension – was that the sum total of my reactions? What, no religious response? Ah yes, there was, and this is exemplified by "Rock of Ages." Picture a serious-minded seven-year-old singing: "While I draw this fleeting breath/When my eyelids close in death/ When I soar through tracts unknown/ See Thee on Thy Judgement Throne ..." The music swells; those capitalised words hammer home the message, and the child who doesn't know the meaning of the word "awe" most certainly experiences it.

Awe is our primeval religious response. And I knew it; and I know it still. Yep, if I know nothing else, I know awe.

**John Bojé**

**Footnote**

Overheard by an aunt of mine many years ago in St Alban's Cathedral, when the ladies of the choir used to sit in a stall behind the choirboys:

After singing the hymn "Jesu, Lover of my soul/ Let me to thy bosom fly", one choirboy whispered to his neighbour: "What is a bosom fly?" The other replied: "Man, I'm not sure, but I think it's something like a dragonfly."

**The editor**

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**KIDS IN CHURCH**

**Submitted by Ponty Thuynsma**

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After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car.  
His father asked him three times what was wrong.  
Finally, the boy replied,  
' That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys. '

~~~~~  
A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they were on the way to church service,  
' And why is it necessary to be quiet in church? '  
One bright little girl replied,  
' Because people are sleeping. '

~~~~~  
A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson.  
" If Jesus were sitting here, He would say,  
'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.' "  
Kevin turned to his younger brother and said,  
" Ryan, you be Jesus ! "

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