



Children's Church



The Franciscan

Advent & Christmas 2011
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

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Foreword

The deadline for submissions for this edition was Sunday 4 December. When I went to church that morning, I had precisely one article – my own on Eco-Congregations! All I could do was pray about it and urge all those I met that day, who had promised me something, to send it in asap. A few articles had trickled in by evening and on Tuesday I had enough material + photos to start compiling the newsletter.

This issue has fewer pages than usual, but the contributions are interesting and varied. My thanks go to the regular contributors and to a new one, who asked tentatively if she might send me something from time to time! By all means and here’s hoping (praying) many more of you will be inspired to sit down at the computer, or put pen to paper, and contribute an article or two next year.

Jill Daugherty, Editor

From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



Incarnation: “The Word became flesh” – This is pure theatre!

We are a highly sensate culture, with our television screens, internet and advertising posters obsessed with how we look and feel and smell, what we eat and what music we listen to. Interestingly enough, however, the result of all this sensory stimulus is NOT a heightened consciousness of reality, but rather the pursuit of “virtual reality”. We seem to prefer the idealized and controllable images of reality, which we can record and replay at will, to the real thing.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*¹, there is an interesting comment on all this: “When a [man] dwells on the pleasures of sense... [there comes] the confusion of the mind, the forgetting of duty.” The Incarnation is about helping us recover the sense of the sacred which our culture and society so disastrously lack.

At the heart of the Incarnation is love and prayer – and the first principle of Christian prayer is that there is only the prayer of Jesus. This is THE prayer. His prayer is the torrent of love and power flowing continuously between Jesus and the Father, and that is the Spirit. And, of course, we cannot really understand it. “ ’Tis mystery all,” Wesley said.² Yet the extraordinary mystery about Christianity is that, although we can never fully understand it, we can experience this river of love that pours itself out in the Spirit and, as the Spirit, between Jesus and the Father.

¹ A 700-verse Hindu scripture that is part of an ancient Sanskrit epic.

² In the hymn *And can it be?* by Charles Wesley.

The secret of the Christian revelation, to which we are called to open our hearts, is that Jesus himself does not ask us to rest (stop) in him (at Bethlehem), but to go beyond him to the Father. This is the essence of the Christian mystery of Christmas – that we transcend self into Jesus and, through Jesus, into the Father.

The theology of prayer is the theology of the Trinity. It is through Jesus, this “Word made flesh” that we begin to have a glimpse of the *Doxa* (Glory) of God.

The Incarnation is given to us that we might learn the TRUE path to God’s glorious Presence. We come to God, not through the self-rejection of mock humility, not through egocentric dependence on, or fear of, a parental God, not through psychological games with our own minds – but through the transforming power of the love of Jesus.

Forget the “littleness” of the Christmas story – it is about the magnificent power and glory and majesty of God, from whose depths come the power and glory of the Resurrection. The Christmas story is about the truth that God loves us and that Jesus dwells in our hearts, in the deep centre of our being. Through the Word become flesh, we know ourselves loved and so we love.

Faith and love engender hope, and Christian hope is the supreme confidence in the truthfulness of Jesus and in the reality of his love. And as we begin to understand that, we let go of everything we want, everything we know and cling to for our security, and launch out into the depths of the mystery that is love, faith and supreme confidence.

“The Word became flesh” – what a message, what a mystery, what theatre! **That**, I believe, is the true message of Christmas.

May you have a blessed Christmas.

Father Timothy

ADVENT
(Brief History)

The origin of the Advent – Christmas – Epiphany Cycle are less well defined than those of the Paschal season. This is because, in the early church, the feast of the Resurrection was of paramount importance.

A celebration of the birth of Christ was a much later development. We find evidence of the celebration of Advent as early as the 4th and 5th centuries in Gaul and Spain. Although we do not know the exact motivation for the season, it seems reasonable to assume that it developed out of a natural desire to prepare for the celebration of Christmas and possibly Epiphany by fasting, prayer and meditation.

WHAT IS ADVENT?
(Beginning of the Liturgical year)

The word Advent means “Coming” or “Arrival”. The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ. Advent is far more than simply marking a 2000 year old event in history.

It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all creation might be reconciled to God. That is a process in which we now participate and the consummation of which we anticipate. Scripture reading for Advent will reflect this emphasis on the 2nd Advent, including themes for accountability for faithfulness at His coming, judgment on sin, and hope of eternal life.

In this double focus on past and future, Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He will come again in power. The church celebrates God’s in breaking into history in the Incarnation and anticipates a future consummation to that history for which “all creation is groaning awaiting its redemption.

Advent is an important time because it flies in the face of the secular Christmas season that is much more about consumerism than Christ. You

must just go to the malls and hear people fighting over toys. Advent looks at how Jesus has broken down into history with his saving acts - first in the incarnation with His birth and secondly how He will come again. It is a hopeful, joyous time as well because of the hope that Christians have not just because it has already come, but because he will come again to restore all things.

LITURGICAL COLOURS

Advent is the beginning of the Christian Year. It begins on the 4th Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest to Nov 30th.

The primary colour for Advent is Purple. This is the colour of penitence and fasting as well as the colour of royalty to welcome the Advent King. The purple colour points to an important connection between Jesus' birth and death. The nativity, the Incarnation of Jesus' coming into the world of the "word made flesh" and dwelling among us, is to reveal God and His grace to the world through life and teaching, but also through his suffering, death and resurrection to reflect this emphasis. Originally Advent was a time of penitence and fasting, much as the season of Lent and so shared the colour of Lent.

THE ADVENT WREATH

The symbol of Advent is the evergreen wreath which represents eternal life and the four candles which remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Each Sunday in worship we will light candles on the Advent wreath. The voices of Advent speak to us of light and hope, of witness and commitment. They call to repentance, to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

from Charles May, *Why bother with Advent?*

submitted by Fr Timothy

**In the Season of Advent our Minds turn to
the Incarnation of God in Christ**

It must have taken a serious decision for this to happen – all the words and virtues had been conveyed through the various religious leaders and the prophets and yet were being ignored – the time had come for a Presence to actually show the way – to lead by example, in so convincing a manner that the Spirit was Incarnate and was also transferred to others who could carry on.

Advent gives way to Easter later in the year and reminds us that Christ lives on despite His crucifixion. We all know how Jesus told the Disciples when he was about to die that they had learnt from Him and would therefore become as Him when they went out into the world. Did they “go out into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit to live and work to His praise and glory”? Do we?

When one looks at the manner in which the Church grew and spread, and how it embraced not only a select few, but strongly drew in and accepted the Gentiles, one must conclude that Jesus lived on, in and through those disciples, for all people.

Last Sunday, in his sermon, Father Tim noted that Jesus is in all of us. This reminds us of our belief that man was made in the image of God, and therefore the Spirit within us is that same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. As with many of our senses, God’s Spirit may be dormant unless it is nurtured and encouraged into use. In that same service we heard of the difference in people, between those did not who care for the needy, sick and disadvantaged – while others do – as did Jesus. Is it through their behaviour that the Way of Christ lives on still more than 2000 years after the Crucifixion? Is this not a form of eternal life? Is it not through these who live the Way of Christ that Christ has eternal life?

In the scriptures we are told of how we can die to sin and live in good behaviour – as we let Christ out from being trapped behind our own needs and desires. This is being born again, and similarly the concept emerges of those in one’s family and circle who adopt our behaviour and carry it on as

a legacy even after we are no longer alive. As the Way of Christ was carried forward through the disciples, so it still is today through those who allow it.

When we aspire to Eternal Life should we not accept that, as we make a conscious effort to set a living example as did Christ, we build a legacy that lives on and multiplies. That living on is our eternal life. That is what Christ did – and it worked! Are we leaving a legacy that demonstrates that by caring for those around us in need and loving them as Christ loved us, we can build a force for good which will live on after us?

In order to bring forward that Christ in us, we need to be at peace within ourselves. We need to look for the good in people and situations, and we need to respect ourselves as instruments of goodwill and care. Above all, we need to let Christ out – He is “locked” up in there somewhere – dying to get out into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit – through us!

Hank Doeg

From the Parish Registers

Baptisms

Date	Child	Date of Birth	Parents
8 Nov	Michelle Radcliffe	11 Sept 2011	Jason & Hermein Radcliffe
27 Nov	Jessica Hewitt	3 March 2011	Julian & Ena Hewitt
11 Nov	Ewan Rodger	12 May 2011	Christopher & Angela Rodger

Marriages

Date of Marriage	Husband	Wife
22 October	Raphael Hilbrig	Kgomoso Maimane

Faithful departed

Date of Death	Name
14 August	Ruby van Koetsveld

Children's Church 2011

It is very hard to believe that the year is almost at an end. Children's Church came to a close on 27 November 2011 and it has been a very good year for us all.

I must admit though, taking over the reins from Heather Napier was not accomplished without some trepidation. The year began with some challenges:- we were often short of teachers – it was a real juggling act. But I am very pleased to say we now have a full team of wonderful teachers.

Our vision is for meaningful teaching of the Scriptures and enjoyable worship and prayer time. Jon-Reece Evans is very much part of our worship, not only to encourage the link between Children's Church and Youth, but making the transition for the young people easier, and so onto communion preparation.

The Mad Hatters Tea Party in August, which was held in the Garden of Remembrance, was great fun and will become an annual event. The Thanksgiving Service too was amazing, the children were totally awesome.

My thanks go especially to the children of St. Francis, to my amazing team: Linda Burgess, Georgina (from Zimbabwe), Megan Napier, Lynn Halliday, Zyanda Majokweni, Angie Lewis, Vanessa Christowiz and Laurence Roland; to Jon-Reece and also to Father Tim for his continuing positive attitude and support for Children's Church.

But always, and in everything, we must test everything and always give thanks.

Special blessings to all your dear families for Christmas.

Aly Kilbride



Family – Does it matter?

Father and I were talking about Advent the other day, and what it means to light the Advent candles in the home, as a family unit, and it got me thinking... What does the concept of “Family” really mean? And does it really matter?

Well, the answer to the second question is pretty cut and dried. Of course Family matters! It creates a sense of “belonging” within us, it helps develop our sense of self, and helps to instil self-confidence and a feeling of worth within ourselves. Family members can love us in a way that nobody else can. In an ideal family situation, it’s a kind of unconditional love and acceptance that we will not be able to find anywhere else. And to me an ideal family situation is being surrounded by people who really and truly care about you, and have your best interests at heart without feelings of resentment, anger, pride, jealousy, or a desire to hurt. Real Family love is the opposite of all of those negative feelings. Being loved by a family means that you never have to justify who you are, or apologise for who you are.

I often think of a poster I used to see when I was growing up, of a little kid with a surly look on his face, looking much the worse for wear, and the caption read, “I know I’m worth something, ‘cause God don’t make no junk!” It always struck a chord in me, being a kind of rebel within our very conservative family myself, and a bit of an outcast at school. It made me feel that God would love me no matter what, and after getting over the rebellious adolescent stage I was in, I began to realise that my family felt the same way about me too. They made me feel loved and accepted for who and what I am, no questions asked. And I think THAT, above all else, is one of our most basic human needs. To be able to reach out to people, and know that they will accept us unconditionally, warts and all.

Which brings me to the second question. What is “Family”? Well, you know, in my humble opinion, the concept of a nuclear family as being a mother, father, and 2.2 children went out with... well, the ark! It’s a very narrow-minded, old-fashioned concept of family, because it is the very blood relations we think of as our “family” that often hurt us the most.

And I'm thinking mainly of abused children and spouses here, but it can be other kinds of hurts and disappointments too. But our true Family are the people that love us unconditionally, and bring us through the hardest times, just by caring deeply for us.

Of course some of us are lucky enough to be born within a family unit that are also loving and caring and accepting of all our numerous imperfections (and might very well consist of a mother, father and 2.2 children), but our Family can also consist of the gay best friend down the road, or our spinster aunt who smells of cats, the adopted or fostered sibling, the friend our folks took in when his parents kicked him out, the old lady down the road who always has a cup of tea and a bit of gossip ready for you, the cousin who has a baby out of wedlock, the lesbian couple who live in your block of flats who you know you can always go to when trouble comes knocking on your door. And of course, the family of Christ, within your own parish. We are all God's children, and therefore we all belong to each other, and are all part of one big family, whether you be gay, straight, lesbian, bi, young and pimply, or old and wrinkly, white, black, pink, blue or purple with yellow spots. We're all worth something, because God don't make no junk! And yes, Family truly DOES matter!

Theresa Innes

Family Matters – Taking a look backwards

A lot has happened this past year. Some of the events we organised were successes, and some...? Not quite as successful as we had hoped.

We opened the year with the Talent Show in February. WHAT an amazing night that was. There was some incredible talent on show, and even I bolstered up enough courage to MC the event, and sing a song or two. The food was amazing, thanks to Heatherlynn Lewis et al, and the fellowship, even more so. The Youth worked hard to help make it a success, both on and off the stage, and have apparently been clamouring at Jon-Reece's door, asking for another one. Mmmm. We'll see.

Then there was the Newcomers' Tea in March, in conjunction with the Youth Car Wash. That was another rip-roaring success, both inside and

outside the hall. Loads of people attended, had something to eat and drink while their cars were being washed, and chatted to friends they hadn't seen for a while, or somebody they'd never spoken to before. It was so heart-warming to see the smiles on all the faces.

Then my sister, a missionary working in Libya, who had been air-lifted out of there just before the skirmishes turned into a full-scale war, came to speak at the two Sunday services in March. Unfortunately, the weather kept quite a few people away, but those that did brave the weather were treated to an in-depth account of what life in Libya was really like. It was inspirational, and heart-wrenching, both at the same time.

And then, finally, there was the Patronal Festival Multi-Cultural Food & Drink evening at the end of September. Again, the weather and the start of the school holidays kept some people away, but those that were there had such an amazing time. The food on sale was REALLY good (especially the British table, which was the only table to sell out), with some people coming back again and again for more and more tickets. At one point there was an unscheduled outbreak of song (once again, thanks to the Brits), and everyone joined in the joyful singing in between mouthfuls of tasty food. It was another incredible evening.

And then in amongst the "big" events, there were the monthly pew leaflet inserts, which I've heard quite a few people enjoy reading every week, the start of the catered tea after most of the services in the second half of the year, the handing out of the Family Cross and the lighting of the Family Candle, the restarting of televisiting (although that sort of, kind of, didn't really work, but ONLY due to a lack of volunteers to help with the list; hint, hint, wink, wink, nudge, nudge; maybe it's something to think about for the new year...), and the Family Matters Survey Letter, which was sent to every family unit on the parish roll (something else that didn't quite get off the ground, mainly because of a lack of response from the parish – but we thank those who did reply).

So we had a few successes, one or two flops, but we are not to be discouraged! We will continue the fight for Family Matters, trying to bring about some Christlike changes within the Family of St Francis once again in

the new year. We are already working on a few new ideas, as well as being determined to get one or two old ones off the ground.

But I want to leave you with one thought as we begin the season of Advent. I want you to know that EACH OF YOU (whether you be part of a family unit, or a singleton, or have developed a different, more modern concept of a family in your own lives) is EXTREMELY important to us. We do what we do for YOU, because we care about YOU! NOBODY is less important than another, and when we talk about Families, we do not only mean a Mother, Father, and 2.2 children. We mean each of you that forms part of the Family of St Francis, and who are part of the greater family of Christ. You are our family, and we are yours. You are not alone, and we are here for you!

Theresa Innes

INTERNATIONAL EVENING

A most enjoyable evening to celebrate St Francis Day was organized by Theresa and Heatherlynn as part of the Family Matters fellowship programme. Various countries, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Uganda, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and Holland were represented and they sold some of their national dishes. There was soup, bobotie, pap and sous, different chicken and fish dishes, vegetables, delicious puddings and coffee available. The Youth table representing the USA offered hamburgers, sodas and ice-cream and was very popular.

The Parish Centre was a hive of activity with national colours displayed at the different tables and people dressed in their national costumes. It was well supported, in fact so well, that there were not enough tables for everybody and many people ate off their laps. There was a wonderful selection of background music organized by John-Reece, which catered to all tastes, and there was so much noise and fellowship that it was not always easy to carry on a conversation. Pianist Dave Evans was in good form and the evening ended with live music and singing of well-known and popular songs.

Linda Lewis



ECO-CONGREGATIONS:

**PEOPLE OF FAITH
CHERISHING LIVING EARTH**

An Eco-Congregation is a local faith-based community committed to working for a more just and sustainable world, in response to the wisdom of sacred texts and faith traditions. Caring for the Earth and the life it supports, including people, is a deep expression of our faith. It is a uniting, community building process that cuts across social and generational boundaries. It gives us an opportunity to put into practice the slogan: ***think globally, act locally.***

By turning awareness into small actions, we become a witness to our sacred and secular communities. We encourage sharing, simplicity and celebration and reject gross consumerism and materialism. At a time when much of the world faces destruction and despair, local Eco-Congregations grow into centres of good sustainable practice. Most importantly, Eco-Congregations are places of hope for the future of all life, in all its fullness.

St Francis of Assisi Waterkloof has registered to become an Eco-Congregation with SAFCEI. As a first step, we have decided to recycle paper and we therefore applied to **Mpact Recycling** who have provided us with 15 bags that we have to fill in order to get onto their programme.

This is how it works:



Requirements of Mpact Recycling

We supply you with bags to start off your recycling programme. The only requirement with the bags is that you need 15 or more full bags before contacting us for a pick up!

Once you have started your programme and can provide us with 1 000kg per month we can supply you with a Paper Bank. The Paper Bank holds between 350kgs and 500kgs when full of newspapers and magazines, so it needs to be emptied at least twice a month.

The only way to do this is to get the members of the congregation to bring paper from home to support the Paper Bank.

Price

We currently pay R200-00 for every ton of paper we receive from you. The more paper you collect the more you earn.

Benefits of Recycling

Recycling is environmentally friendly.

1 Ton of Recycled Paper saves 17 mature pines trees.

1 Ton of Recycled Paper occupies 3m³ of valuable landfill space.

In comparison to making new paper, 40% less energy and 50% less water is required.

ACCEPTED PAPER	NOT ACCEPTED
Newspaper	Dog Food or Cement Packets
Magazines	Any paper that is wax coated
Junk Mail	Plastic Bags, Plastic Bottles
Office Paper	Sweet & Crisp Papers
School Books (plastic wrapping to be removed)	Sugar or Flour Packets
Telephone Directories	Milk or Juice Boxes
Cereal or Toothpaste Boxes	Brown boxes even if flattened (Do not put into the Paper Bank)

We need your help to fill our 15 bags as soon as possible so that we can get our Paper Bank in the New Year – please support this first initiative of ours to become an Eco-Congregation!

What does this involve?

Becoming an Eco-Congregation is a response to our faith commitment. It weaves caring for the world and creation into all aspects of life and work in a congregation. It encourages three core areas of involvement:

1. Concern for the Earth in learning about and expressing our faith:

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

As people of faith we can foreground gratitude and care for God’s world in all our celebrations and acts of worship; in our teaching, preaching, praying and meditation and in group and private study.

2. Stewardship of the Earth’s bounty:

CUSTODIANSHIP OF GOD’S GIFTS

As people of faith, being called to care for the world and all that is in it, we turn our places of worship, community meeting spaces and homes into centres where we set an example of good earth-keeping practice. By living more thoughtfully, saving resources like water and energy and looking after what we have, we can turn good intentions into practical actions.

3. Local and global community action:

GOD’S PEOPLE AT WORK IN THE WORLD

The future life on our planet is threatened by human activities. Eco-congregations can lead the way to a more sustainable future by getting involved in community projects and networks and lobbying and working for better environmental standards and practices.

You will hear more next year about our efforts to become an Eco-Congregation. In the meantime, you can visit the SAFCEI website if you have access to a computer: www.safcei.org.za

The above text is based on documentation from SAFCEI and MPACT Recycling.

Jill Daugherty

PARTY FOR TUMELONG ORPHANS

On Saturday 26 November a party for the Tumelong orphans, organized by June van der Merwe and her Craft and Fellowship group, was held in the Parish Centre. As the bus was expected at midday, a few people arrived early to get things ready. By 1:30 tempers were becoming a bit frazzled and some people left, but those who stayed found it worth the wait.

Finally at 2 o'clock, amidst great excitement, the bus arrived. Diana Higgs, myself and some others went to meet the bus. The little ones were the first to get out. The first two went straight to Diana who bent down and suddenly found herself with a child in each arm. As the next little one came out, I held out my hand for him to take, but instead he lifted up his arms so I too had a child to carry. It makes you feel so humble and almost guilty that these little ones crave close human contact.

Thereafter the bigger ones exited and all rushed off to the bathrooms. We congregated in the courtyard and sang a song. The youngest kids started dancing, in perfect rhythm and entranced us all. Father Tim said grace and the kids were each handed a box of food, sponsored by Wimpy of Woodlands Boulevard. The Youth who had turned out in force handed out cold drinks and the children sat down to a lunch which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Once lunch was finished, one of the volunteers who look after the children, a lady no taller than some of the children, made them stand in a large circle and proceeded to keep us all entertained. She was amazing and controlled the children in an amusing and seemingly effortless manner filled with humour. They played games and it wasn't long before the Youth had joined in. Great fun was had by all. A while later York Rodda narrated three stories and did a magic trick that had them all enthralled. Thereafter two older kids told a story and then it was time to wind up the afternoon.

Every child received a packet containing sweets and chips with a small gift, donated by Joe and June van der Merwe. Farewells were said and as they climbed onto the bus they were each given a roll.

All in all it was a great afternoon and it was wonderful seeing the Parish Centre being utilized by people less fortunate than we are. I came away vowing to be more diligent about my participation in the Fill-a-bag scheme, which I had somewhat neglected during the year. It made me realize how important these food bags are, and it would be great if more parishioners could join the scheme, donating just some of the contents if unable to supply a full bag every month. This ministry alleviates the hunger experienced by people supported by Tumelong – many of whom are children like these orphans, living with families that are often child-headed and have very little or no income.

Linda Lewis





An extract from Robert Benson's *In constant prayer*
(Between brackets in italics are my own comments & thoughts.)

(Robert Benson writes about praying the daily offices.)

Annie Dillard writes: 'How we spend our days is how we spend our lives.' Time is the real currency of our age, and we have to manage our time in relation to our spiritual life as much as we do in relation to any other part of our lives. Our hearts are where our treasure is, or so we have been told. Our love is where our time goes too.

The office takes about between 9 & 12 minutes to say (*that's pretty quick including the scriptures & psalms set for the day*), but I can spend 9 minutes just putting off what I am supposed to be doing for the next 60 minutes. I would be willing to guess I am not the only one. It is certainly true that some days are more hectic than others, and some days are not my own. It's really embarrassing to me when I make a lame excuse, when I say such a thing about my communion with the One whom I claim to love more than anything or anyone else. We must never forget that we live in a state of siege... and as often as not we are the enemy at our own gates.

Chapter 7: *Lost between the daily and the Divine*

Go into your closet and pray. *Jesus of Nazareth*

There will be days when the office will be a burden to you. *Rule of Taizé*

Discipline is the prize of freedom. *Elton Trueblood*

I am not incapable of handling a fair amount of 21st century stuff: book airline tickets online, set up automatic payments on the internet, program TiVo, etc, but I have to tell you that moving 3 ribbons in a prayer book, reading the chart that tells me which lectionary scriptures to read (*or sometimes for most people I know, just to read scripture and pray*) is too much to ask. I would also really like to be known as a person of prayer as well. You do not become a person of prayer and then begin to pray. It works the other way around.

I must say my office with great care, writes Charles de Foucauld. It is my daily offering of fresh flowers and roses, symbolic of fresh love offered daily to the Beloved Spouse.

What I have to do today is go into (my closet) and close the door. I have to open the book. I have to make my offering to the One to whom these prayers are made and the One for whom these prayers are offered... and on those days when my office seems like one more chore I would like to avoid? Brother Roger has some advice: on such days know how to offer your body, since your presence already signifies your desire, **momentarily unrealized**, to praise your Lord. (*This is so often for me my saving grace – knowing that He accepts my very limited offering.*) I do not know if I will ever become a person of prayer. But I do know that there is only way it will ever happen. People of prayer say their prayers – every day. (*He goes on to tell about other things that have embarrassed him in his life – he spent some time in a psych ward once...*) I would not recommend this, but would also not discourage it either if you need it. There is stuff you do not pay attention to until some guy takes your shoes and your belt and your car keys (*what about a cell phone? - most people's life line*) and will not give them back until you pay attention to your life and the way you live it. It is also where I learnt to make little boxes. One for medicine, one for lunch (*he used to forget to have it*) one for exercise, etc. When I feel bad I look at the boxes and inevitably I realise, oh oh, no exercise for a while and in the life-or-death situation I was in at the time, it actually worked. In short, most of the time you get things done because you want to colour in box number three.

There is a moment when the whole business (*praying the daily office*), no matter how deeply we are drawn to it, seems to be a daunting task. The time, the complication of it, the discipline required to be faithful to it, **the suspicion that most days there will be no immediate return from it** – a whole host of fears and doubts and uncertainties hold us back. It has always been this way: it is not simply because we live in the modern age. It helps to remember that

we are to be about the daily (*the now?*): the Divine will take care of the divine.

(I recommend this book to all of you – published in 2008

ISBN 978-0-8499-2108-7)

Monique Winn

holidays

AHHHHH BLISS...

As the long trip down to the Wild Coast recedes in our memory, the tension eases from our shoulderblades and the Now becomes all there is..... We drink deeply from the beauty around us. I watch a donkey roll on the beach, four legs in the air like an overgrown Labrador. A solitary beachwalker makes huge circles in the air with her arms and I understand the feeling. The space here expands to the touch of our souls as we breathe deeply. The huge sky with its cloudy scenery plays out the majesty of God and the fact that we have a 360 degree wide screen contributes to the deep sense of awe. We keep running for the camera knowing that it is impossible to capture with a lens what our eyes are seeing. I have a compulsion to share it and not keep it for myself and yet I know He is saying: "Just enjoy – it's not yours to keep or hold."



I watch our resident dove (the pair sleep on the front veranda under the eaves) clean the crumbs off the table, where I had my early coffee, as the sun rises over the sea tinging everything a shade of pink an artist can only dream of copying! We went for a walk yesterday afternoon late after a brief downpour and the colours and hues of the sky were jaw dropping. Everything was glistening in the soft dusky light. Building interior castles, I scour the beach for treasure. Rock pools hold underwater cities filled with darting colourful fish and black spiky anemones.



After four days of total seclusion we reluctantly venture out to Eagles View for brunch. We meet Artist Spud and his wife (he apologizes tongue in cheek for the view) and enjoys showing us around his ‘accommodation’. Rather too rustic for the likes of us city types – walls built with beer bottles embedded in painted cement and very interesting plumbing. The rock basin next to the pub used to grind mealies and everywhere you look are pieces of carved driftwood, paintings and drawings. Our pub companions, a train driver and his friend, join us in expressing our appreciation for the very eclectic mix of ‘stuff’. Between hundreds of caps hanging from the roof beams, I spotted a very small g-string, an ancient wooden washing machine, a stove dating from the 1800s with pipes made of whale bones. While putting food down for a gerbil, field mouse, pin-tailed wydahs, and numerous bird visitors to his pub, he tells us about viewing killer whales battling each other for a calf. After they had eaten only the ‘soft’ parts – tongue, underbelly, etc – the corpse drifted downstream followed by a great white shark that disposed of the rest. Life is hectic here in rural Transkei.

Monique Winn