



Shrove Tuesday



The Franciscan

Easter 2011
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

Contents

Foreword	2
From the Rector's Desk	3
From the Parish Registers	5
Testimonies of our Confirmands	6
The Clergy Desk	8
The Pastor's Cat	9
Easter	10
Youth Photos	12
Stewards of the Planet	14
DCAB	16
Opportunities to Serve	19

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Foreword

This Easter edition is quite short, in spite of including "Opportunities to Serve", which fills six pages. We have had several parish functions and many people took photos with cameras and cellphones, but no one forwarded any pictures to me or thought to write a report of a function and their impressions of it for *The Franciscan*. Two video clips of the Talent Show were posted on YouTube and subsequently downloaded to our Facebook page, where you can also see a photo of the Confirmation service. It seems that, as new technology takes over, the old methods of communication are forgotten. If you want the newsletter to survive, please get writing again and email me photos you take of parish events. Many thanks to those of you who did submit articles and to the Youth photographer for the photos that do appear.

Jill Daugherty, Editor

From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



How do you encounter the Risen Lord?

A careful reading of Scripture will reveal that whilst a number of people encountered the Resurrected Christ, each did so in a unique way. Mary had her name spoken aloud by Jesus (whom she mistook for the gardener). Instantly she recognised Him and was moved (surely) to tears of joy and gratitude.

(Put your finger on your wrist and feel your pulse beat – the rhythm of life. Hear each beat as the voice of the Risen Jesus uttering your name over and over.)

The disciples on the way to Emmaus encountered the Risen Christ 'twice'. The first time, they did not even realise it was Him, but they felt their hearts burning within them as this 'stranger' spoke. The second time it was in the breaking of the bread that they 'saw' Him for who He was – the Resurrected Jesus.

(Have our hearts and eyes become so 'familiar with it all' that we fail to encounter the Risen One in Holy Scripture and in the profundity of the Holy Eucharist?)

Then there was the incident when the Resurrected Christ stood on the beach (though the disciples who were fishing did not know it was Jesus) and suggested to them they should cast their net to the right side of the boat. It was St John who first recognised him. 'It is the Lord!' he said to Peter.

(Can we reflect anew on the Risen Christ's desire to use us as His missionary people, called to gather people and forge community in our world?)

In Mark 16: 9-15 it is recorded how the Risen Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene (who told those who had been with Him, though they did not believe her), then He appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking in the country (and they too were not believed when they told the rest) and finally He appeared to the eleven disciples themselves in the Upper Room (where He upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw Him after He had risen).

(Do we as followers of Christ have the personal freedom and willingness to acknowledge the lack of faith and the stubbornness which we (often) share with those first disciples and apostles?)

May we this Easter renew our commitment to and faith in the One who is indeed Risen.

**Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

May you enjoy a wonderful and glorious Easter as you celebrate your new encounter with the Risen Christ.

Father Timothy

Prayer used in Lent Course

Spirit of Jesus, you travel before us,
Guiding us along unexpected paths.
Let down from heaven your gracious gifts,
And shed new insight upon our leaders,
So that they can help all your people grow.

From ***Growing the Church with USPG***

See also ***The World is My Parish*** at: www.uspg.org.uk/worldismyparish

From the Parish Registers

Confirmation

Date of Confirmation	Name of Confirmand
27 February 2011	Kathleen Godfrey
	Nicolai Kruys
	Kgolagano Maimane
	Agobokwe Mostepe
	Clarissa Payne
	Bothhale Mothibe

Marriages

Date of Marriage	Husband	Wife
25 Sept 2010	Gerhard Badenhorst	Jennifer (Sewell) Badenhorst
11 Dec 2010	Ivan Jenkins	Michaele (Yssel) Jenkins
18 Feb 2011	Johan Marnewick	Nicole (Pienaar) Marnewick
05 March 2011	James Pretorius	Cheryl (du Preez) Pretorius
19 March 2011	Peter King	Denise Buiten

Faithful departed

Date of Death	Name
20 January 2011	Dawn Lambert
11 February 2011	Bev Nauhaus
13 April 2011	John Mallory

TESTIMONIES OF OUR CONFIRMANDS

I remember when this journey began. I went to a place called bush school. I entered there with almost no spirituality and I met a man who opened my eyes and set me on the right path. With his help I joined the youth group and through them I discovered the confirmation class. I remember originally joining it and feeling the warmth of the Holy Spirit within me. From that day forward I was placed on the right path. These last months were tough in confirmation, mainly because we never has a constant teacher, but somehow the light shone through and we have all travelled this long, arduous road together. In the lessons I strengthened my relationship with God. I learnt of the many spiritual gifts that the Lord was willing to give man and I even discovered a few were passed on to me. I know my journey has only just begun, but I know now more than ever that this is where I belong, in the Kingdom of the Lord.

Nicolai Kruiys

The reason why I am getting confirmed is because I am making a stronger commitment to the vows that my parents made at my baptism. I am committing myself to stronger Christian ways and not worshipping other religions and gods. I believe in one Holy and Apostolic church and one God. I am going to confirm these vows at my confirmation ceremony.

Luthando Dube

The reason why I joined Confirmation is because my parents advised me to join. I gave their suggestion a lot of thought. I made a final decision to join Confirmation. This is one of the longest journeys that I have taken and finally, I'm at the end. I do know that it was worth the 2 years of getting to know God in terms of knowing who He is and who Jesus is. Now that I'm at the end, I've had time to learn more about myself. It's not what I am, it's who I am and what I believe in.

Kgolangano Maimane

I started my Christian journey from a young age. I was baptized as a baby and regularly attended Sunday School. Because we moved from Cape Town to Pretoria, I struggled to find a church like my previous one. I gradually stopped going to church. In 2007 my Gran died and I blamed God. I stopped believing. I knew that there was something missing in my life and started considering joining a parish. In August 2009 I attended my first St Francis service and knew from that moment that I was ready to be confirmed, ready to be responsible for my own faith and make the promise my parents made so many years ago at my Baptism.

Clarissa Payne

My Confirmation journey certainly has been an experience! Confirmation classes have been an almost constant Wednesday activity for the past 2 years. There was Confirmation when you were sleepy, when you had homework and projects, and Confirmation in the pouring rain. But I can honestly say that I have learned from and enjoyed every class. God has been close to me these past 2 years, and I know in my heart that my relationship with God will continue to grow even through strife, as I have experienced.

Kathleen Godfrey

On this day the 27th of Feb 2011, I am finally going to take one of the biggest steps in my religious life, which I have wanted to do for quite some time now.

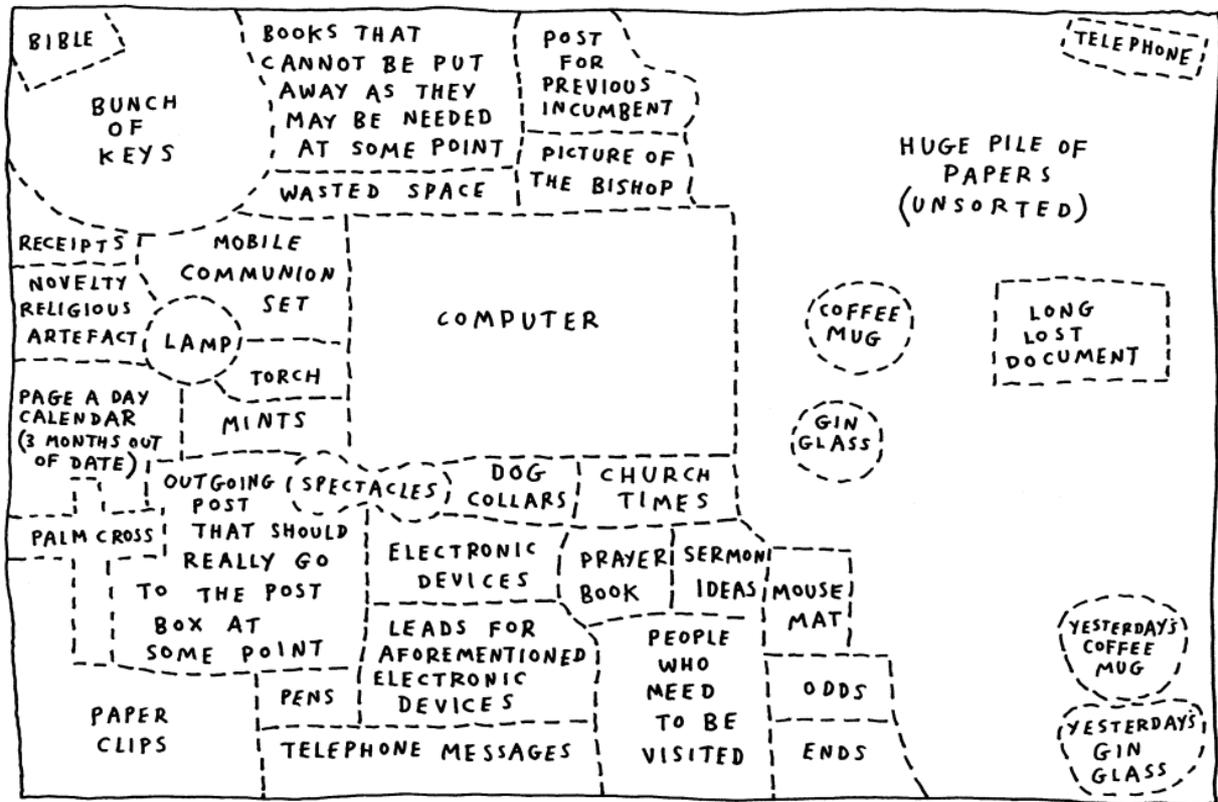
Ever since I was young I would watch my older cousins go through the process of being confirmed, which I really also wanted to go through, but unfortunately I was too young. I now believe that I am more mature and ready to take the responsibility that my parents vowed to lead, guide and protect me when I was being baptized into the family of God.

One of the main reasons why I have always desired to go through this process of being confirmed is that my grandfather was an Anglican priest and I believe doing this wouldn't just bring me closer to God but also to my grandfather.

Agobokwe Motsepe

THE CLERGY DESK

THE TRIED AND TESTED WAY TO ARRANGE IT



CartoonChurch.com

Father Tim recognised his own desk in the above diagram...

Spotted in a New York subway by Lindsey Geyer:

Wage Christian guerrilla warfare:

- *Do random deeds of kindness &*
- *Perform senseless acts of beauty*

THE PASTOR'S CAT

Dwight Nelson recently told a true story about the pastor of his church. He had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard and then was afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, etc. The kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided that if he tied a rope to his car and pulled it until the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten.

That's what he did, all the while checking his progress in the car. He then figured if he went just a little bit further, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved the car a little further forward, the rope broke. The tree went 'boing!' and the kitten instantly sailed through the air – out of sight. The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighbourhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, “Lord, I just commit this kitten to your keeping,” and went on about his business.

A few days later he was at the grocery store, and met one of his church members. He happened to look into her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. This woman was a cat hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, “Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?” She replied, “You won't believe this,” and then told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the Mom finally told her little girl, “Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it.” She told the pastor, “I watched my child go out in the yard, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws outspread, and landed right in front of her.”

Never underestimate the Power of God and His unique sense of humour. Anyone can count the seeds in an apple; but only God can count the apples in a seed.

GIVE ME A SENSE OF HUMOR, LORD,
GIVE ME THE GRACE TO SEE A JOKE,
TO GET SOME HUMOUR OUT OF LIFE.
AMEN !

Submitted by Elise Lowes

Easter

Jesus Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia, alleluia!

Aren't those joyous words? And indeed, this is a joyous time. Perhaps THE most joyous time in the church's calendar. It is one of those times of the year that make us feel all warm and fuzzy inside, with thoughts of hot cross buns, matzah, pickled fish and, of course, EASTER EGGS dancing in our heads. Easter means the onset of winter, so we feel comforted by thoughts of bundling up in front of a cosy fire, drinking copious amounts of hot chocolate, and basically settling down to nest, or hibernate, until September when the weather starts warming up once more. But Easter also means palm crosses, and self-sacrifice, and remembering Our Lord, and the inevitable fate he would endure. It was pre-ordained, and at some point He must have realised it, and had to live with that knowledge, silently, as He went about his ministry, knowing where His journey would lead him. And he went anyway.

Jesus did it all anyway, because He loved His Father, He was obedient to Him, without reservation or compromise, and because He knew that it was for the greater good. Jesus suffered agony, and humiliation, and debasement, and ridicule for us, because He loves us. He wanted us to have an eternal life with His Father, and He knew that the only way to do that was to die for us. He gave His earthly life, so that we might live. But then something incredible happened. Something that made it all worthwhile. Something that allowed us to know for sure that He is God's son, and not just some "holy man" as some would have us believe. He rose again!

Three days after numerous people watched him die on the cross at Calvary, He rose again. And THAT is the good news that makes this time of year a bitter-sweet one. We mourn for the tragedy of His death, but then we celebrate the incredibly good news of His rising. And it is the absolute faith and belief in His rising that sets us apart. He wasn't just a mortal who did good deeds and loved God. He was (and is) God's son. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived and worked as a man. He ministered to the sick, and the poor. He was put to death on the cross, and then He rose again, three days later.

The stuff of myth and legend, isn't it? Except that it's not a myth, or a legend. It's very, very real. Our God truly is an awesome God. He gave us His only begotten Son, orchestrated His death, for the sanctity of our souls, and for the forgiveness of our sins, so that we might one day join Him in heaven. And then He took His Son "home", to be seated at His right hand, for all eternity.

This is such incredible news that God wants us to shout it from the rooftops, to spread the good news as far and wide as we can. Let's rejoice, and be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit this Easter weekend, so that our spiritual cup runneth over. Let the joy fill us, overwhelm us, and take us over. And let's take that joy, and the knowledge of God's grace and goodness, into our families, and love them as He loves us. Wholeheartedly, purely, and unconditionally. Let's fill our homes with God's love, grace and mercy this Easter, and then see how far we can spread that love into our daily lives. Let us truly fill the world with love our whole lives through. Why? Because.....Family Matters!

And we're all part of God's family, are we not?

Love,
Theresa

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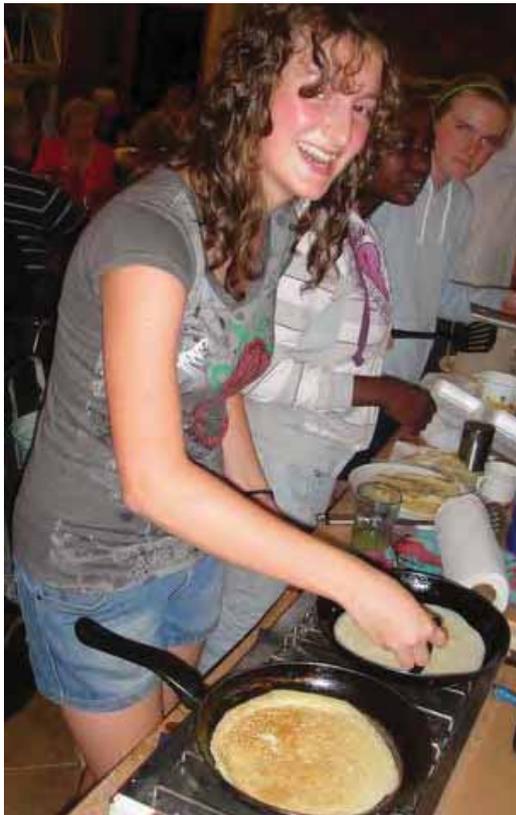
Pancake Evening: the Youth display their culinary talents



Some boys cook, some admire



Jon-Reece manages two pans at the same time



The girls add know-how and grace

The Youth wash cars ...and have fun



Hiking in the Magaliesberg



Stewards of the planet

When I moved to Pretoria ten years ago, I quickly understood why it was called the Garden City. City streets were lined with large trees, providing a glorious display of scented blossoms in the spring and a welcome protection from the hot sun in the summer. Traffic medians were covered with shrubs and flowers. Large tracts of open veld and forest provided a feeling of space and green zones for birds and small mammals. Tragically, much of this has changed over the past ten years. Thousands of trees have been ripped up in order to build dozens of new shopping malls, clusters of minute townhouses, one on top of the other, and to widen the roads. This is development, we're told.

I am not against development. I am against the way we are doing it. Trees and green zones are the lifeblood of the planet. By replacing vegetation with tar and cement we have altered our Gauteng micro-climate, making it hotter and drier and driving our local wildlife into ever smaller areas. There are ways of greening our new developments. We can, for example, plant large-canopy, indigenous trees (not imported scraggly palms) in parking lots, on pavements, at off-ramps and verges next to the road, and in green strips that could be left open between buildings in townhouse developments and RDP housing. This option would require a little less greed on the part of developers eager to earn as much as possible by covering as much land as possible with buildings. Another option is to build up more and out less, i.e. build multi-storey offices, shops and houses so that more of the surrounding land can be planted with vegetation.

There are also technologies for planting greenery on frames attached to buildings, which has the triple benefit of cooling the building, absorbing carbon dioxide and beautifying the area. The style of building can also reduce the amount of energy needed (and carbon dioxide generated) by, for example, building long eaves over north-facing windows to keep out the summer sun and let in the winter sun, knowledge that South African builders had 50 years ago, but got lost when the pseudo-Tuscan craze hit South Africa. (In Tuscany, houses have large wooden shutters that are closed against the hot midday sun!) More information on these and other ideas is available at: <http://www.greenbuilding.co.za>

I am desperately worried about the rapid destruction of our local environment in Pretoria, not to mention what we are doing to the planet as a whole. A couple of years ago I wrote a letter to the then Minister of Environment and Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, urging him to consider initiating legislation that would require that when a certain area of land gets developed, say 200 m², developers should be required to plant at least one large-canopied indigenous tree. He wrote back to say this was not his jurisdiction and that I should write to the Minister of Forestry. I did so, but got no reply. I wrote to the former mayor of Tshwane three times with a similar suggestion, but got no reply.

Last year I wrote to the SA Road Agency about the way in which the highway areas (called road reserves) have been desertified. I was particularly concerned about the hideous off-ramps, such as Rigel and Lynnwood, where several hectares of land have been covered in cement bricks instead of plants. Plants would absorb some of the carbon dioxide generated by all those cars, cool the area and so reduce the need for air conditioners and soothe the frayed tempers of drivers caught in traffic. SANRAL replied to me within a week and I introduced one of their representatives to someone from the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pretoria, where I work, to do some research and initiate some pilot projects on beautifying the road reserves.

Global warming is accelerating as the polar icecaps melt and the dark water absorbs more and more energy from the sun that the ice used to reflect away. We all have a responsibility for the health of our planet. God told us to be stewards of the Earth, not to rape and pillage it for our own selfish gain. Perhaps there are others in the church who have more tenacity than I do to try to get bylaws and legislation enacted that will help to at least protect our little corner of the planet. In the meantime, let's keep growing our own gardens!

Diane Grayson

Seen on a bumper sticker:

Earth first! We'll stuff up the other planets later.



Dikeletsong Citizens' Advice Bureau (DCAB) is a Non Profit Organisation run mainly by volunteers who do not receive salaries – we depend on donations (from religious institutions, business, NGOs, embassies and individuals) to pay our rent and running costs. Established in 1967 by ministers of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Catholic Churches in the inner city, the CAB (later DCAB) turned 40 in 2007. It was housed at St Alban's Cathedral in Schoeman Street until 2007, when it moved to the IDASA Building at the corner of Visagie and Prinsloo Streets.

DCAB provides free advice and help to the most disadvantaged members of the community. They come to DCAB because they cannot afford legal fees and don't know where else to go with their problems. These problems are mainly about employment and labour relations, social grants, housing, health and disabilities, refugee status, schooling, consumer and municipal matters. The most common problems are unfair dismissals, unpaid salaries and provident funds, and non registration of UIF; the most heartbreaking ones concern unpaid salaries and the exploitation of refugees. We interview the clients, give them advice and make telephone calls, write emails and letters on their behalf. We have a large database, kept up to date by our researchers, which assists us in solving their problems. All our clients' affairs are of course dealt with on a strictly confidential basis.

I was first introduced to DCAB in 2006 by Rev Martzi Eidelberg, who worked as a volunteer for many years and was the DCAB representative at St Francis. I fell in love with the Organisation and thought that with my legal background I could be of much help. This has proved to be correct, but some of my cases have been very difficult. Fortunately we work hand in hand with various labour departments and with the Unisa and Pretoria University Legal Aid Clinics. Many of our clients are referred to us by the Legal Aid Board. We are also invited by some Government Departments to participate in their workshops and training.

One of the cases that I dealt with took three years to resolve. It concerned a Malawian woman (Meggie) who came to South Africa in 2000 to live with her Malawian husband. He had been working in South Africa since 1996 and carried a South African ID. Unfortunately her husband died in 2007 and Meggie could not claim her husband's UIF death benefits because she did not have a 13 digit barcoded ID, even though she had her marriage certificate. I contacted the UIF and Labour Department and they confirmed that only SA Citizens were entitled to UIF benefits. She had applied to Home Affairs for an ID in 2006, but when we contacted them about her problem, they were not interested in helping her. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Membathisi Mdladlana, to intervene on Meggie's behalf as her deadline for claiming UIF benefits was about to lapse.

The Office of the Minister did not respond to my letter and we wrote another letter to him. When his response came, however, it merely confirmed what his department had said. We turned to the Legal Resources' Centre for help, and they were willing to fight the claim for us and to challenge the Act that said only SA Citizens were eligible to claim for death benefits. The case dragged on until finally, on 5 October 2009, we received the good news that the Minister had amended the Unemployment Insurance Act of 2001 (Act No 63 of 2001) to include valid foreign identity documents and passports. I'm happy to report that our client eventually received her husband's death benefits in 2010 – and she was very happy too!

In 2009, DCAB received a donation for one year from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to open an Outreach Programme in a township. We looked around in Mabopane, Mamelodi and Atteridgeville for an office. The office was finally opened in Saulsville at the Lutheran church. Two people with legal and social work backgrounds were employed on a year's contract with full pay. We were also able to employ one person at the Pretoria office. The Saulsville office was very successful and dealt with more than 250 cases a month, both old and new cases. Unfortunately after a year the Canadian Embassy could not fund us anymore and the Saulsville office was closed. We applied for funding from different organisations and this year in February we received a donation from the Foundation for Human Rights to re-open the Saulsville office for a year. The Lutheran church could no longer accommodate us, but we were lucky enough to find another office in Saulsville. The office started running again from 1 April this year. We were fortunate enough to get the same employees as they had very generously continued to work for DCAB as volunteers after their contract had expired in 2010.

At DCAB, we have monthly meetings and we discuss the interesting cases we have had, statistics of the cases, available workshops and training courses and other matters in the Organisation. We handle more than 4000 cases per year and our intention is to reach as many people as possible, especially in the rural areas. Our clients come from as far as Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Mafikeng, and we even receive letters from prisoners.

The Organisation is always looking for more volunteers. The main criteria we look for in a volunteer are "compassion and tolerance towards the less fortunate in the community, maturity, medium level education, interest in community work and a caring attitude," to quote the DCAB Profile. All volunteers are welcome, but we would particularly like to have volunteers who speak an indigenous language, as some of our clients have difficulty expressing themselves in English or Afrikaans.

Louisa Thomo
DCAB Volunteer Worker
St Francis Representative for DCAB