



Joan Jones ordained Deacon



The Franciscan

August 2008
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

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Foreword

This issue of *The Franciscan* is later than usual – I was away from 1 June to 20 July. I had hoped to find many articles waiting for me on my return, but it seems the editor has to be present before articles are submitted. My thanks to those who did submit on time and those who responded to my request for more articles. I also want to thank the photographers who faithfully record parish events – I can only use a few of their photos, but these greatly enhance the articles they illustrate.

So once again we have a good mix of articles – the Youth have been busy, Joan Jones was ordained, a Family Building Programme is being established. Read all about these and other matters.

Jill Daugherty, Editor

From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



Underlying much of human resentment towards God is the 'suffering of the innocent' (especially children), whilst God 'impassively looks on!' ... 'It's just so unfair. After all He's this Great God – why doesn't He do something?'

I think I need to be honest and admit that I myself, on occasion, have felt pangs of frustration as I perceived God simply to be 'impassively looking on' in situations of great injustice and suffering. Perhaps you have too?

Why **does** God allow suffering?

As ever, there are great, great men and women of God who are infinitely more capable of dealing with this topic – but, herewith, my own humble understanding of the matter, in the hope that it will shed some 'light' on your own frustrations – as it has on mine.

It is vital that we understand quite clearly that God is **not** indifferent to suffering. When the Holy Scriptures came into contact with the prevalent Greek philosophy of the day, what was truly shocking was that they portrayed god's 'passions'. The fact that the God of the Bible 'suffered' was utterly unique to the thinking of the day and the Bible is 'riddled' with references to God's own suffering:

- o Genesis 6 : 6 [God was] grieved to his heart.
- o Micah 6 : 3 'O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!'

... to name but two. What makes this lament even more poignant is the fact that it comes from the love of a betrayed Father: 'Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.' (Is 1 : 2)

God is therefore affected out of pure love. And the Bible does not shy away from revealing a certain 'impotence' on God's part, caused by His love of His creation. Humanity does all in its power to provoke, with its idols and rebellions. Any 'caring leader' worth his salt surely ought not to tolerate such endless, blatant 'in your face' disobedience. But it is exactly here that we witness a contrast – for God's 'caring' reveals itself in a dramatic forgiving: 'How can I give you up, O Ephraim! How can I hand you over, O Israel... My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger.' (Hos 11 : 8-9)

And even when God is obliged to fall back on punishment to make his people see light and to purify them from their iniquity (as during the Exile), it is written: 'He does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men.' (Lam 3 : 33) If humanity suffers, God suffers too, because he is acting against his will.

Reference was made above to the scandal (to the philosophers) concerning this revelation about God. To them, God was an idea rather than a living person; an 'idea' does not 'suffer' or 'have passions'. At most, they believed their god 'moves the world insofar as he is loved' (as the final cause), but not insofar as **he** loves and loves **first** (so taught Aristotle). He would disqualify himself if he did, because he would be submitting to what is changeable and particular. God (they taught) is the Unmoved Mover, it is he who moves everything while remaining in himself immobile and impassible. One philosopher wrote: 'God must not be subject to any temporal sentiment of hatred or love... he cannot (therefore) feel either anger or mercy; he must not be perturbed by sorrow...'

This was the dominating idea of God at the time when Christian theology was in its infancy. Indeed, for centuries, there was even a concerted effort by some Gnostic scholars (**within** the household of faith) to eliminate all references to God's 'passions' from the Bible and adapt the Christian concept of God to that of the philosophers.

But, as ever, the TRUTH won through. Tertullian, one of the strictest and most courageous apologists, wrote: 'In order to learn who God is, we do not go to the philosophers or to Epicure; we go to the prophets and to Christ. We, who believe in a God who even came to earth wanting to share with us the lowliness of the human state for our salvation, are very far from the idea of those who want a God who cares for nothing...'

Even those scholars who were fascinated by the prevailing Greek philosophy remained faithful to the Bible on this point. Origen, the most famous of these, commenting on the Bible, goes so far as to affirm that, in a certain sense, in God, the Passion preceded the Incarnation and that the earthly and historical Passion of Christ is the manifestation and consequence of a preceding passion which the Father had suffered for us. 'He suffered our passions even before suffering the Cross, before he deigned to take on our flesh. If he had not undergone the first, he would not have come to participate in our human life. What was this passion which he suffered for us at the beginning? It was the passion of love...'

So, quite simply, Christians, unlike philosophers, love and serve a God:

- a) who is **not** indifferent to human passions and fears;
- b) who **can** and **does** love – and, in doing so, shows Himself committed to entering the reality of human drama. He does not remain aloof or, as the philosophers put it, 'impassible and tranquil'.

The Cross surely highlights to us that God intimately engages his creation. St Thomas Aquinas tells that the Father gave his Son to death 'insofar as he inspired him with the will to die for us, infusing him with love for us'. The 'mandate' the Son received from the Father is therefore, first of all, to love us ... and this transmitted 'passion of love' took Jesus to the Cross.

And this 'passion of love' is carried to **us**. Through his Gospel and life, Jesus says to us that we now need to carry the flame of hope to our generation. Something **you** can do in the world (for the Father) is to sacramentally live out the 'passion of the Father's love' in your world

and environment. And this is not an indication of God's own indifference. God in Christ has revealed his total commitment to His creation – and that commitment is passed on as a baton to the Church (to us).

In this world, there will always be injustice, war, famine, hopelessness, wanton cruelty and an endless litany of barbaric activity. But none of this is God's doing. At the heart of it, lies endless wanton greed, greed, greed; arrogance; indifference to our neighbour's needs; the insatiable thirst for power and glory and recognition (here too the litany is endless).

God weeps as much as we do – and as much as He has (in love) engaged humanity, so He calls each of us (the Church) to engage our communities with this message of hope and forgiveness.

I will continue to be disturbed and appalled at the mess our planet is in – but I will work with God to 'undo' that which human nature has wreaked upon itself because the God the Incarnate of Hope has shown Himself not only to be real, but as One who 'holds the Christ-light to me in the night-time of my fears'.

Bibliography

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Father Timothy

GOD...

God is in the sky.

God is way up high.

God is in the sun

Watching children having fun.

God is in a work of art.

But best of all...

God is in the heart.

Megan Napier (Grd 6)

THE NEW MORALITY

Jesus said: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Both these moral directives come from the Old Testament, and were re-emphasised by Jesus. We recite them every Sunday, but **how do we live them out** in our everyday lives? Especially when the new morality has taken hold, which simply stated is: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Recently we requested feedback from the congregation about their views on the driving values in our homes, our church, and our community. Very few responses were received. This is understandable: it was a difficult question, given the society in which we have to survive today. Perhaps the telling question we need to ask is: "How would I answer my children ... or grandchildren, when they bring home a project from school wherein they are asked to enumerate the most important values to be applied in their lives." What would you advise them to respond?

This came home to me when my granddaughter asked me about Romans 12 : 4-5. You know the passage well:

For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all of us, united with Christ, form one body, serving individually as limbs and organs to one another.

We discussed it and she concluded that it meant that we had a responsibility to one another, in exactly the same way as our own body parts had to function in unison for us to achieve what we do. It made me wonder how much it described the value of a healthy family wherein all the functions were well coordinated and cooperative, and in which there were no secrets or deceptions.

This exchange took place on the day that Father Timothy and I had met with Owen Musiker, a SAPS officer in his earlier life, who has been, and is still, deeply involved in matters affecting the youth and

the factors which drive them to crime. This followed a prior meeting we had held with Bill Schroder, headmaster of Boys' High, who told us of what they are doing to support parental efforts to build the moral values of our youth.

Sadly both told us that there was a particular element of familial guidance that resulted in young people turning to peers, rather than parents, for all their advice, and even more disturbing, turning to those who offer the thrills of substance abuse. The element was poor communication within the family – of values, of morals, of responsibility.

Owen described to us how human trafficking is present even in Waterkloof, and that recently a young girl from this area was drugged in Hatfield, abducted to a house in the area, where she was repeatedly abused, raped and drugged in preparation for onward shipment to one of the prostitution hubs. She had been sold to the traffickers for R 500, to fund the drug requirements of the person who had drugged her. This is not an isolated incident, and shows how close to home the threat is.

Your Parish Council has agreed to establish a programme of Family Building, *From Strength to Strength*, within the parish. This is aimed at providing a supportive and non-threatening resource wherein parents, young people and families can meet to discuss their concerns and fears with others in a supportive atmosphere, without fear of judgement. It will aim to bring to the parish top-level facilitators and advisors to build on the strengths of the family. It will no longer be necessary to be alone. Thanks to the Lewis family we have a growing HEAL ministry, which is an element of this programme. Others are already in development.

WHAT'S IN THIS FOR YOU?

This initiative presents at least two opportunities for you:

- You can be one of the functioning limbs or organs, contributing to the effort by offering your talents – *many limbs and organs, all with different functions*.

The Franciscan

- You can meet and share with others in the parish to pool “best practices”, positive experiences, and discuss the resolution of challenges facing you or those around you – *one body, serving individually as limbs and organs to one another.*

Which will **you** choose to be? Please ‘Offer yourself as a living sacrifice’ (APB) and join with us in this effort.

Hank Doeg (082 683 5681/ hankdoeg@informsa.co.za)

MY ORDINATION

I was surprised when people said to me: 'Congratulations, you have worked so hard to achieve your goal.' Nothing could be further from the truth. I have always been happy taking a back seat (pew, if you like). Hard work has never daunted me; rewards surprise me.

When Archie Archibald, deacon at the time, asked me to be a worship leader, I thought he had it wrong. On further investigation he said, 'At the 07:30 service.' Then I knew he had lost it. I had been a regular 09:30 person for 12 years – I loved my Saturday nights out and a lie-in on a Sunday. His advice was to talk to Martin the Rector.

Martin's advice was to phone and speak to a certain person at the cathedral. In obedience, I did what I was instructed to do. When I was asked what course I intended to study, I was too embarrassed to ask details but asked for advice. I parted with a large sum of money, for a single parent with two children, and so began my lay ministry and my 14 years of study, on a Sunday, after the 07:30 service.

I had been disciplined by my parents to finish whatever I started, including 'all the food on my plate'. So my studies became my spiritual food. I enjoyed the studying, but tried to get smart and do projects instead of exams, creating a lot of extra work. So we learn. I did not mind working Monday to Saturday and then studying on Sundays. I had a two hour lunch break, for the sake of Bob, who I am sure was relieved to have me out of his hair (he had been on his own for 16 years before we married) and he did not have to feel guilty about playing bowls on Sundays. To be fair, he is very supportive of all I do and, according to Timothy, is very proud of me.

The course changed three times during my period of study. By the time I was awarded the diploma, I only had to do two more courses to complete the degree, so I opted to change to the degree course, but now had to achieve a pass mark of 60%.

I graduated in April and, imagine my surprise, when I was sent off to the Fellowship of Vocations, invited to an interview a month later and ordained as deacon a month after that. I had no time to desire, ask questions or catch my breath. I just prayed: 'Lord, may thy will be done.'

Joan Jones

Joan's Ordination: Facedown before the Almighty

The splendour of the King robed in majesty

These familiar words to a much loved song that we sing during our worship times jumped to mind as we celebrated Joan's ordination recently. I am a dyed in the wool Anglican, but for those who know me well I far prefer the freer worship WITHIN the liturgical structures and I rebel against very formal incense-filled services. But I have realised God is not limited by what I expect and that day I certainly felt God's presence as Joan stood before the Bishop and repeated her vows. Louis Giglio writes these wise words in Matt Redman's book: We need to 'expand the scope of the vocabulary of each tradition so that it more adequately carries the breadth and depth required of all Christian worship'.

I had the great joy of planning the music for the services (with Heatherlynn Lewis) and I am continually amazed at how **God** chooses the songs and hymns. We were led to focus on the role of the deacon – her calling to SERVANTHOOD and the offering of herself in totality. All of this was constantly brought to the fore during the service.

It was a real blessing to have an ordination of such a personal nature happening on home soil where all the congregation were free to be part of it – sadly not more of the 7:30 congregation, where Joan serves most often, attended, as they really missed an opportunity – although of course there were a few who did join us. Perhaps if we are allowed this privilege again we might have a combined service to encourage ALL to participate.

I found the sermon (by Rev Patricia Ohlson, Rector of St Hilda's) very hard to accept as it was SO definitely a warning that we take up our cross when we offer our lives for ordination. It is NOT a badge of status within the church, but one of giving up one's own will in submission to HIM. Joan has always epitomised that attitude for me – it is not about her or what she prefers, but about what she can do to serve. In fact it was her humility that made the day so much about God and so little about Joan! As she lay facedown on the carpet (something I am certain feels uncomfortable for many), she reminded me of the title of Matt Redman's book about worship

entitled *Facedown*. (Matt is one of the leading world-renowned worship leaders at Hillsong).

I want to quote Matt Redman: 'Each time we gather together as a worshipping community we must find ways to reflect **these aspects of the nature and character of God**. The songs are one thing but it goes way beyond the music. It's our whole approach. Are we preparing our hearts for the divine encounter? This is a spiritual occasion which must be, marked by mystery and wonder. And you cannot rush into wonder.'

Terry Brauer

JOAN'S ORDINATION: MANY BLESSINGS

I was very honoured to be invited, together with my husband and our two sons, to Joan's ordination. I had no idea how truly blessed we would be and how deep the blessings would run.

We were immediately made to feel welcome at St Francis and found the Holy Spirit very much alive there. I know this because I was moved to tears during almost the whole service. After the service, I said to my husband 'It was very short, wasn't it?' and was surprised to find that it had lasted two hours.

Prior to the service, I had had a very deep conversation with a friend who was concerned about her parents. She was not sure of their relationship with God and I did not even know if her parents attended church. But God's grace has no boundaries – there, sitting in front of us, were my friend's parents and it was evident that they were participating in the service. I was very pleased to be able to pass on this wonderful news to my friend, who was delighted. After speaking to Joan, I realised that they had also been invited by her. Thank you, Joan, for your obedience to our Lord and being the instrument for so many to receive blessings.

God is our glorious King.

Nicky Jimenez

ORDINATION : At the Altar



**After the Ordination :
Flanked by Lay
Minister Linda Lewis &
Rev Patricia Ohlson,
Deacon Joan is
congratulated by
Bishop Jo Seoka**



YOUTH PHOTOS

Farewell Party for Craig and Fiona Thistlewhite



Easter Scavenger Hunt

Dodgeball 2008



YOUTH REPORT

Here we are, six months already gone – where has time flown? The youth have had such an eventful year. The December Leaders' Training Camp was once again a huge success, in which six of our leaders were able to understand all that God has put in place for them through Prayer – read more about it in Craig's report below.

Our next big event was Renew Student Camp, in which 60 students from all over Pretoria got together at Rocky Valley to experience God's renewal and to start the New Year with vigour and energy! The student camp was a huge success and we definitely will be looking at a repeat. In the holidays the youth all enjoyed a skate at Kolonnade Ice-rink and a round of Bowling.

The Willows Dodgeball Tournament was lots of fun and with our colour scheme being green we once again stood out from the crowd and, dare I say it, 'Girls Rule!!!', as our Girls' team won their league. Our first big fundraiser of the year was a sad disappointment, but my Leaders never fail to smile and make the best of it. Thanks, guys, for giving up your Friday night in the middle of your exams to be of service (Ezekiel 34:26). The Easter Scavenger Hunt sent everyone, in the rain and dark, researching the Easter story.

There has been much growth and improvement in the family services. The youth band has done a sterling job – special thanks to Allen Reis for the time he took to help the band, to Terry and Heatherlynn, and a huge thank-you to Amy Harris for the countless hours she spent with the band. The girls' Bible study has been a wonderful retreat every week, a place to reassess our roles as women in God's eyes. The confirmees of 2008 will be confirmed on 17 August and all fourteen have stuck through the gruelling year and a half.

I went away to Rocky Valley in Krugersdorp for a week to a Youth Pastors' Winter School. There I was joined by fourteen other youth pastors from all over South Africa. We spent the week learning many things about ministry and discussing our own individual programmes and youth groups. It was also a wonderful opportunity to pool resources together.

The meeting with Bill Schroder on building the family for social development was very informative and gave us all courage and, especially, a starting point. I am very excited about this initiative as I am passionate about family ministry and feel that we need to work within the family context.

At the recent Holiday Club at Brooklyn Methodist, I felt God's presence in each one of the children we saw. Our theme was 'Horton hears a Who', with the different messages on the different days being: Our World; God's Purpose; Our Family and Friends; Forgiveness and Salvation; and, How to be a Who In the world. Our main message was: 'A person's a person no matter how small.' The week took many weeks of prep, stress and sleepless nights, but it was all worth it and it was wonderful to see a few St Francis children there. We will probably have the Holiday Club with Brooklyn Methodist at St Francis next year. During the week we had some special visitors: Chris Boschoff from Edu Zoo brought along a lemur, a bushbaby, a meerkat, a bullfrog, a hedgehog and – the cherry on the top – Priscilla, a 4,5 metre snake, which I had the privilege of holding and carrying, all of her 45 kilos!

Having had some of our youth go on *Chrysalis*, it was wonderful to have them experience God's love and blessing and to see all their happy faces on return.

Still to come later in the year is our Youth Camp from 26 to 28 September – please keep us in your prayers. If anyone feels s/he would like to help in any way with the camp, please let me know – it is always great to involve the whole family of God.

Many Blessings, *Megan Winn*

DCamp

DCamp for me was such an awesome experience. On the way down, one of our kombis broke down – nothing new apparently – so twenty-three of us were stranded, but with the help of a few other friendly campers we were rescued. We arrived at camp at 18:30,

gobbled down our supper and joined the rest of the campers in the hall for worship.

The music, the food, the joyfulness and the teenagers were all great. The worship times were some of the best times ever. Seeing 150 young people worshipping One God was a wonderful experience to witness. We were like a family! We learnt about Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. One of the sessions in the evening was Confession, where we could give all our worries and problems to the Lord and this was the most touching night ever, where I could open up to the Lord and give it all over to Him.

DCamp was a memorable experience and I hope I can do it again!

Craig Thistlewhite

The True Dream Giver

The true dream giver gave me a dream

let go of my fears, let out a scream.

I want to run and seek Your face.

On that hill You hung to give me grace.

I surrender all I am to You,

cleanse me within, stronger, renew.

You will never leave me in desolate land,

I want to run into Your outstretched hand.

The true dream giver gave me a dream

let go of my fears, let out a scream!

Tlhabi Tlailane (written on Student Camp 08)

THE ANGLICAN ROSARY

I have been interested in the Anglican rosary after Fr Tim showed me one, and I recovered these comments from the Internet. Martzi suggested that I pass them on to you, in case a summary might be appropriate for your next edition.
Tony Williams

The documents that Tony found on the Internet are the following:

St Gabriel's Episcopal Church www.saintgabriels.org/rosary.html

Anglican Franciscan Brothers www.franciscan.org.au/wp/anglican.html

The Anglican rosary consists of a Cross, one Invitatory Bead, 4 Cruciform Beads and 4 x 7 Week Beads:



The number of beads is significant: there is a total of 33 beads, reminding us that Christ lived on earth for 33 years. The 4 Cruciform Beads and the 4 sets of Week Beads represent (among other things) the 4 quadrants of the Church's year, the 4 cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance) and the 4 weeks of the lunar month. Each set of Week beads consists of 7 beads, one for every day of the week. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the number 7 represents spiritual perfection and completion.

The Anglican Rosary blends the Roman Catholic Rosary and the Greek/Russian Orthodox Prayer Rope. The user assigns a short prayer

to the Cross and then to every bead and repeats these prayers while touching the beads in succession. This touching prevents the mind from wandering and saying the prayers leads one into contemplative prayer.

Prayers suggested for the Cross are the Lord's Prayer and the Gloria. For the Invitatory Bead, being an invitation to prayer, one could say one of these prayers:

- Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise.
- Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

The Cruciform (= cross-shaped) Beads could invoke one of the prayers we say in the Communion Service just before the Prayer of Humble Access:

- Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us [...]
- Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world [...]

For the Week Beads one or more of the following could be used:

- Hail Mary full of grace [...]
- Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.
- My God, my all.
- The world was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

"As there [are] no set 'formulae' for the Anglican Rosary, people can develop prayers for use with the Rosary that reflect their own spiritual journey. The Rosary then becomes a simple tool to aid in prayer life. It becomes a way to deepen one's prayer life by encouraging not only the mind but the body to participate in prayer." (Anglican Franciscan Brothers)

"When you have completed the round of the Rosary, you should end with a period of silence. This silence allows you to center your being in an extended period of silence. It also invites reflection and listening after you have invoked the Name and Presence of God." (St Gabriel's Episcopal Church)

Summary by Jill Daugherty

That Dam Priest

Greetings from 'that dam priest' and his family. So much has happened in the last few months that sometimes I still have to pinch myself to realise that it has happened.

I cannot say that the transition has been without any incidents. But what has been confirmed is what we knew all along – that St Francis is a real family and that they have been there for us just as any family would have been. We have known and experienced the generosity of all, starting with all the meals that we received in the first few weeks, then the huge financial assistance that we were given when we had all our car troubles, and finally all the very generous gifts that both my family and I received with my ordination and our move to the Dam. My vestments alone have become the talk of the town and are quite beautiful and help all to focus on God in the Sunday worship. It has been so nice on the Sundays to look up from the pulpit and see one or two familiar faces sitting there and being part of St Jude's worship. I know that you continue to pray for us.

What about the future? Well you are all welcome to come out and visit us at the Dam, be it on a Sunday for a service or any other day. In passing, if you are looking for a quiet place to be by yourself with God, St Jude's is the ideal spot. Please phone and let me know when you would like to come out and arrangements can be made. We would appreciate your prayers – for the Alpha course that we are going to run at Peaconwood on a Tuesday afternoon, for the growth of the church, for lay participation and just for our whole family as we adapt to all the changes in our lives.

You can say that we are missionaries from St Francis and you are the family that has sent us out. We will never forget you and hope that you will never forget us.

God bless you all.

Fr Grant, Ann, Craig and Fiona

PS: See the latest *Kingdom* for article and photo about St Jude's.

God's Presence in our Daily Lives

I think I chose St Francis as my parish because, like its namesake, I am fond of animals. I have six pets, one of which is an Amazon green parrot called Samson.

One day early in June, Samson flew away. I had hand-reared him from the age of five weeks and, over the years, we have formed quite a bond. Matthew 10 : 29 reads: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? Yet not one of these will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.' With this in mind, I prayed, asking God to take care of my bird and enable me to get him back.

Samson disappeared on a Friday. I spotted him three times in three days. On Saturday morning from my back door, but high up a tree in a garden of the next door complex. I tried to reach him with my pressure hose, but to no avail, even though I stood on a section of the boundary wall. All I succeeded in doing was to shock myself on the electric fence!

That same night, I saw him high up in a tree across the road. This time, a few people came to help me try and coax him down. One used a bazooka to wet him, but Samson just enjoyed the shower. A father and his son threw pebbles and a piece of rope, also without success, even although they were quite accurate in their aim. It was only when a passer-by climbed the tree that he flew away and disappeared somewhere into the surrounding trees.

On Sunday morning, I got up at the crack of dawn and took my dogs for a walk, following the general direction in which I had seen him fly. I called his name and was delighted when Samson answered. This time, although I could hear him, he was not visible. When I had taken the dogs home, I went back to the vicinity where I had heard him. The same person who had used the bazooka the evening before (Laura) saw me and very excitedly informed me that the parrot was in the tree outside her bedroom window.

Samson's cage is fortunately on wheel. I pushed it to her garden and used apples to try and tempt him down. This exercise was no less exasperating than the previous ones – the parrot tried to come

down, but it appears to be very difficult for a parrot to continue on a downward trail and Samson just climbed higher.

Finally Laura remembered there was a hook in the garage and her husband Alec fetched it and a long ladder. He climbed the ladder and pulled the branch down gently, so as not to alarm the parrot. I don't know how he managed not to fall off the ladder because, as he bent the branch, his body bent backwards as well. He managed to descend the ladder in this awkward position until I could take hold of Samson and triumphantly return him to his cage.

Matthew 10 : 31 tells us: 'Even the very hairs of your heads are numbered.' I now realise how true this is because, out of the millions of prayers offered to our Lord daily, mine was answered. It made me very aware that to God every member of His creation is very special to Him.

Linda Lewis

From the Parish Registers

Baptism

30 March	Russell Thomas Branch
6 April	Mark Dale Wolter
6 April	Precious Monyai Wolter

Marriages

24 May	Brian Hutchinson and Jacinda Esau
7 June	Shivi Sharma and Diana Sewell

Fill-a-Bag Update

In order to dispel any uncertainties regarding the Fill-a-bag ministry, we would like to confirm that the project is ongoing and we are still fully reliant on your contributions. Bags are no longer labelled. A stock of bags is always available at the back of the Church. We thank those who faithfully contribute and if anyone feels led to this very needy cause, please contact us. A Tumelong representative collects bags every second and fourth Monday of the month. Any cash donations at any stage would be a huge blessing to the Fill-a-bag project.

Convenors: Jenni 082 823 5897 & Carole 082 7877755

SWIMMING LESSONS FOR MAMELODI CHILDREN

Members of St Francis have been involved in ministry opportunities with an organisation called **Tateni**, which operates in Mamelodi and works with families affected by HIV/Aids, focusing on providing support to orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children in Mamelodi. One small project taken on as part of this ministry was to take children for swimming lessons, as this was one thing many of the children had said they would really love to do. Four girls were taken for lessons from January to May 2008 and successfully learnt how to swim and even began to master some of the swimming strokes before the swim school closed for the winter break.

The girls shared in our Family Service in June and thanked everyone who had contributed towards the lessons. It was wonderful to know that they had not only acquired a new skill (which will no doubt benefit them throughout their lives), but that they had also gained in self confidence. By contributing towards the cost of these lessons, members of St Francis and others had been part of building self-esteem in four girls who will no doubt need it in all the challenges they will face in their lives to come! The St Francis Children's Church has committed all their collections to this project and met the girls from Tateni.

All too soon the swimming school will be opening again and Tsidi from **Tateni** has identified four boys who are keen to learn to swim. I will make an appeal in church for people who may want to support (financially or in other ways) the continuation of this initiative. The needs are as follows:

- Four people to sponsor the cost of the swimming lessons (R140 per month for 6 to 8 months, depending on their progress).
- Someone to buy 4 swimming towels (or give the approximately R320 required to buy these).
- Ongoing contributions towards fruit, muffins and juice that we give the children each week (or the actual muffins which can be frozen, small juices etc.).
- People who can give lifts to the lessons every now and then as emergency back-up when I am away on a particular Saturday.

The vision is also that this becomes a means for building relationships and breaking down barriers (especially overcoming some of the fears and prejudices around HIV/Aids). It is hoped that those sponsoring swimming

lessons will also get to meet the children they sponsor and show a personal interest in their progress.

I look forward to hearing from you if you are able to offer any support so that this small, but significant, ministry, which has a huge impact on the lives of children who really deserve a break in life, can be continued.

Cathy Meiklejohn



At the Akasia
Camp for Victims
of Xenophobic
Violence at the
end of May 2008



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