



Angels at Mamre : Holy Trinity Icon by Andrei Rublev



# *The Franciscan*

Trinity 2010  
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

## Contents

Foreword .....	2
From the Rector's Desk .....	3
From the Parish Registers .....	5
It's all the Parent's Fault .....	6
Parents are Archers, Children are Arrows .....	9
Oasis Youth Report .....	10
Gratitude & Appreciation from Megan Winn .....	13
St Francis Pudding Stall .....	15
God the Refiner and Purifier .....	16
A Grace before Supper .....	17
John Mallory's Memories, Part 1 .....	18
Rublev's Trinity Icon .....	22
News from Martzi .....	23

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## Foreword

As announced in the Easter *Franciscan*, we are trying to issue four newsletters this year, as we used to do in the past, instead of just the three that we have managed to produce over the last few years. This edition is a bit thinner than usual, but contains articles that are relevant to the Trinity period, so we felt it should be published now.

Many thanks to those who responded to the request in the pew leaflet for submissions, but I'm sure there are many more of you who have something interesting to share – please get writing for the next two editions: Michaelmas (end of September) and Advent/Christmas (December).

Good news for those who have access to the Internet: after many delays, the switch-over to our new service provider is at last complete, which means that our website will shortly be updated.

**Jill Daugherty, Editor**

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## From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



Having just received an e-mail depicting various ways the vuvuzela could be used post-World Cup (including one hilarious one related to ACSA), I have been inspired to write this letter for the Trinity edition of *The Franciscan*.

The World Cup has been and gone (almost impossible to believe, if one considers that 'just yesterday' it was 3 years away). And what a World Cup it was! Who would have thought we would get a 9/10 rating from FIFA? (About 50% of the South African population, is the answer.) Well done South Africa – you've gone from being somewhat of a perceived pariah to being the darling of the world. Blow the vuvuzelas!!

And speaking of perceptions, why is it that we South Africans have an almost natural propensity towards pessimism? It's almost as if we truly believe that old adage: 'If something can go wrong, it will.' In fact, we are so bad that, if something does go right, we are astonished.

Well, the World Cup not only went 'right', it went wonderfully, brilliantly 'right', and we thank God for that. But, back to the question. I believe that, at the heart of the malaise, is a tendency to live in the past. We tend to hark back to the 'good old days', the implication being that that is when things were good.

There is a wonderful story in the Holy Scriptures about a group of people who were brought out of Egypt (and slavery) and led by God towards the Promised Land (and freedom). Now you'd think that this group would have been delighted at the prospect. But no, all they ever did was whine and complain – and hark back to the

'good old days' (in Egypt). Good old days? Days which were steeped in oppression and cruelty? Goodness me, what short memories they had.

Too many South Africans are just as foolish. The truth is that the adage 'Good old days' has two fundamental flaws, which render it not only incongruous, but ultimately superfluous.

Firstly, the thing about 'old' is that they are just that – old. Not that everything from the past must be rubbished, but if one only hangs onto that which is past (in the mistaken notion that it was all positive), not only is this not true, but it hampers any forward movement.

Secondly, it is not true (as stated above) that everything in the past was indubitably 'good'. Much, no doubt, was, but there was a whole lot that was simply awful. And, within the South African context, for the majority of South Africans the past was a place of unimaginable poverty, deprivation and suffering – not least of all the fact that the colour of their skin 'classified' them as second-class human beings.

I am not suggesting that the way forward is not fraught with its own challenges and failures (it has been and will continue to be), but what is indisputable is that, if you were to ask the majority if they wanted to 'go back to Egypt', the answer would be a resounding NO! Not to a place where they were denied access to any form of decent existence.

And surely, as followers of Christ, we would not want the 'old order' of things to be re-established, so that once again the minority could have a 'good life' – but at the expense of the others. So my simple message is this. Let's play our part post-World Cup to build on the optimism and generosity which prevailed for those 5 weeks. Don't allow yourself to slide back into the negativity (about everything), which all too easily holds captive the national psyche. Let each of us instead:

- pray daily for our leaders (that they too will build on it in terms of service delivery, accountability and good governance);
- give thanks to God for all that is wonderful about this amazing land (with all its challenges);

## *The Franciscan*

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- count to ten before simply mouthing words of pessimism;
- and finally: thank God for the blessings we do enjoy, which far exceed the wildest expectations and dreams of, not only the majority of people on earth, but the majority of people on our own doorstep.
- Oh yes, one more thing – blow your vuvuzela from time to time! It will bring back many happy memories.

**Dominus vobiscum,**

**Father Timothy**



**From the Parish Registers**

Faithfully departed

<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>
14 March 2010	George Dennis Paul

## It's all the Parent's Fault



The week of Pentecost was an eye-opener with regard to views on the reason for the problems experienced by the young people in our community.

Firstly, we experienced the Pentecost lessons; at the same time *The Kingdom* became available with a strong emphasis on the youth. In it we had views expressed by Bishop Jo, Megan Winn and Mark de Vries of the University of Illinois.

### **All make challenging points, and also display encouraging signs.**

Bishop Jo championed the synodal project of 'Turning Houses into Homes' when he addressed a recent Diocesan Standing Committee meeting. Setjea George Mahlaela quotes him thus in *The Kingdom*:

*Families are separated by hard demands of work. Some parents are too rich and too busy with other things. They try to make their children 'happy' with expensive toys and loads of pocket money. Some children do not know what family is. There is no family sense and fellowship. Schools have therefore come to replace homes. School hostels are sanctuaries where some children hide from the unhappiness of their own homes and families.*

At the level of St Francis, Megan Winn, outgoing Youth Pastor, writes in *The Kingdom*, quoting Mark De Vries of the University of Illinois:

*Increasingly isolated from the adult world, more children and youth simply fend for themselves, often under the dispassionate care of television and other technology, sometimes under the thumb of shameful abuse and neglect.*

She goes on to explain that, according to De Vries, the Church also often isolates young people by separating them from the 'church', by having separate youth gatherings, children's church, etc. She describes how the youth group of St Francis decided to get the parents and young people connected, and get them talking. They staged a Parents and Youth evening, which in a nutshell concluded that the secret to a sound family was simply communication. She goes on to say:

*We need to get the parents to help with resources and to give of their time to pray for the youth. Adults need to be encouraged and motivated to want to help out. **The youth are desperate to find someone to look up to, trust and relate to.***

**This begs the question: Why not their Parents?**

Megan had this to say about the Oasis Sunday night meetings:

*Getting the youth involved in changing our families is vital, but I think we are missing the fact that many of the kids come to Youth on a Sunday night for solace and a place away from home where they can get advice and talk about their problems in a safe environment, so the number one focus of the youth leaders should ultimately be the youth and their issues, and not their families.*

Clearly, lack of support within the family is the cause of the flight of the youth to a refuge, where the focus is on themselves.

**Whose responsibility is it?**

Archbishop Thabo saw it as his responsibility to personally act as an example and role model to his children – he saw it as a parental responsibility. They also had responsibilities – like one limb to another.

This Lent, the diocese made a study document available that focused on building families – Making Houses into Homes – which among other issues raised that of seeking out the good in family situations rather than bemoaning the bad. It followed a core Christian practice of ‘counting one’s Blessings’. At St Francis, confirmation candidates took part and the Lent Course groups were deliberately made to be diverse. Discussion was frank.

A suggestion was made in the material distributed that we each write to each member of our family and identify to them the blessings they represent to us. A wonderful sentiment – but how to put it into practice? One of the young members in my group reflectively said, in response to an enquiry as to what had made an impression on her:

*I have very poor relationships with my family members and I have decided to go home and write a letter to each one pointing out to them the blessings they represent to me.*

One feels sure that this would have proved to be a fruitful opener to communication within her family.

### **Positive actions speak louder than words**

Cannot each one of us, parent and offspring, act as role models, one to another, and to our associates, not by words (except those in letters making peace, identifying blessings), but by what we do and how we behave, and care one for the other? Christ taught by being a role model. He put into practice what he said in words; deeds replaced words, and His example became followed, even sometimes without words being necessary. 'Who is this who can cast out demons?'

### **The message of Pentecost**

On Pentecost Sunday an inspiring slant was put upon the interpretation of the significance of this event in the life and development of Christianity. Father Tim pointed out that, in reality, the event was a uniting one. **Communication** made it so. Since everybody could comprehend the other, understanding emerged. Differences disappeared. Not everybody understands the words, yet unity can still result.

It can easily happen, when you show the way – **let your deeds communicate the message**. A parent's role-modelling is their most powerful tool. The maxim of the best parent is said to be: Don't do as I Say, do as I Do.

May we put forward a suggestion to you, and each family member – write a letter to each member of your family and point out the blessings they put forward to you – tell them the example they represent to you as a role modelling experience. Yes, it is possible to learn from your children, they are wiser from their experiences than we realise. It's worth the effort!

Discuss the idea over a family dinner table – indicating that you care about how others care for one another.

Make it a family goal to THINK POSITIVE!

**Hank Doeg**



## **Parents are Archers, Children are Arrows**

*Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are...children.*  
(Psalm 127:4)

The Bible says parents are like archers and children are like arrows. Parent, as an archer, it's your job to:

1. Protect them in the quiver (home). After the assassination of her husband, Jacqueline Kennedy was asked if she planned to run for political office. 'No,' she replied, 'my major effort must be devoted to my children. If they turn out badly, nothing I could do in the public eye would have any meaning.'

Our children are growing up in a generation where they can get drugs, buy weapons, meet a predator, engage in virtual sex, and do it all under your own roof via computer. That should alarm you! You say, 'I figured it out; they will too.' No, 'A child left to himself brings shame to his [parents]...Correct your son, and...he will give delight to your soul' (Proverbs 29:15-17). But be careful. If your children view you as judgmental and joyless they'll avoid you, then later explode like a time bomb. Build a home in which they can ask questions openly, get answers and form lifelong values. The word 'warrior' means you must fight for them!

2. Aim them in the right direction. 'Train up a child in the way he should go...' (Proverbs 22:6). Don't overprotect them or you'll choke their creativity, don't sacrifice them for material things, and don't impose your unfulfilled dreams on them. Help them to discover their talents and discern God's plan for their life; then become their biggest cheerleader.
3. Release them. It can be difficult letting go. But it's easier when you know you've taught them the truth; they're covered by prayer, and under God's protection.

Taken from 'The Word for Today' by Bob and Debby Gass  
A free daily devotional from United Christian Broadcasters  
PO Box 255, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 8YY. UK



## Second Term Report

This second term was no different from any other – awesome, crazy and mad! As part of the Tumelong turning 70 celebrations held on 10 April at St Mary's DSG, Oasis Youth took part in the 5-a-side soccer tournament and won! They had some tough competition from All Saints Mamelodi, who came fully kitted out, and the HEAL house, who gave them a good run, but luckily for us our players didn't need to stop for smoke breaks. :) Our players were thrilled to each receive a trophy and many thanks to Keba and his team for organising a wonderful day.

On 7 May we went out in yellow as our chosen colour to the annual Willows Dodgeball tournament, but unfortunately came home empty handed; however, both our teams were in the finals. I walked around like an old lady for a week after that, but we had loads of fun, strategising on how to take down the opposition.

Our Bafana Bafana family service on 6 June was a wonderful way for me to be able to see the family of God worshipping in African spirit. It was a service filled with warmth and love, the worship was great with so many singers. The children made the sermon – sorry Lance, I mean Tim.

The Combined Holiday Club with Brooklyn Methodist from 14 to 18 June was the best thus far. *Toy Story* was our theme and the five days were about: Purpose, Who do we listen to, Friends & Judging, Forgiveness & Rejection and Heroes. We had 65 kids, the most we have ever had. It was such a blessing as we had a big team of helpers.

The week was filled with laughter. On the Thursday night we had our concert, during which I discovered that one of our 7 year olds had a twin sister. When I asked him why she hadn't been at holiday club, he replied: 'I told her it was for boys only!' I made sure she came on

the Friday. Thursday was also the day in which we told the children about God and about having a personal relationship with Him. We used the South African flag like the wordless book, each colour representing what God has done for us and why we want eternal life. One of the Grade 4 girls was praying with her leaders about having a relationship with God and her hands started to shake, she said that she really felt God's presence and has never been so happy in her life before! Thank you to everyone, who helped make it a wonderful success!

Thank you so much to all the youth who came to my farewell braai at the church. It was so great to spend one last evening with you all. Thank you for the slide show and skit, now all my secrets are sung, I mean out. ;) Thank you for all the gifts – the electronic frame will display all my memories.

My hope is that the church will continue to unify across all ages and the church body will continue to support the youth for, as Mark de Vries puts it: 'An extended Christian family is a community of believers who affirm and encourage growth toward Christian maturity. Although having a set of peers who affirm one's Christian faith is important, teenagers particularly need adults who can help provide a consistent, lifelong structure of Christian maturity.' (*Family-based youth ministry*)

**Megan Winn**



The winning 5-a-side soccer team with Megan and Keba Matlhako, Tumelong's Director of Programmes

### The Holiday Club Toys



### Holiday Club Leaders



## **Gratitude and Appreciation**

The last three and a half years of working at St. Francis as youth pastor have been my most challenging years yet, physically, emotionally and spiritually. With so many memories I will hold dear, I am filled with thanks and gratitude to you, the family of St. Francis. I want to thank all the members who held the youth and me in prayer, during all our various camps and events.

Thank you to Uncle Joe for bringing me a bite to eat every Tuesday morning, I shall now most definitely drop a dress size. ;) Thank you to Oumie who was always asking about the youth and supplying copious amounts of chocolate brownies for cake sales and other FUN-ctions. To the Thursday afternoon prayer group who prayed weekly for the youth – thank you, those prayers were most definitely felt. Thank you to the Family Matters group who is making a huge difference in the families at St. Francis – keep on striving on!

Thank you to Jeanette and David who always cleaned up (especially my office) and locked up after us. Thank you Shirley for making all the calls, emails, photocopies and just your support when I was down and we had chats in the main office. Thank you to Terry, Heather-Lynn, Rob, Heather, Ali, Allen & Dave for all your help with making family services a place where we can all be included and catered for. Thank you to my Boss for your wise words and encouragement about persevering when dealing with the youth. Thank you Heather for all your help and getting the word out to the children about all our youth activities – you have been a huge support and encourager, through the past three years. May you continue to be blessed.

Thank you to my leaders who put in so much extra time helping to make each youth evening run more smoothly. I pray that you will continue to follow God (Matt 4:19) and lead where he calls you; remember you are always an example to those around you.

But mostly I want to thank the youth who have made doing God's work so worthwhile, through the hard times, sad times and wonderful times of rejoicing. Thank you for always supporting me in everything I signed you up for, even if a bit of bribery was involved. ;) Everyone knows that when they ask Oasis Youth to get involved we come in

full force! I have been so blessed being able to work with you on a weekly, if not a regular basis; thank you for letting me into your life and space. May you know that God loves you so much and nothing can separate you from His love (Romans 8:38 – 39).

I will miss you all terribly, but I know that God still has his hand over Oasis Youth and has wonderful plans for you all (Jeremiah 29: 11–13). To my parents and family, thank you so much for all your prayers and support, may you be repaid in kind!

Be blessed, **Megs**

**Megan and her leaders**



### **So what happens now?**

Megan is no longer our Youth Pastor as she is concentrating on her post graduate studies in psychology for the rest of the year. We wish her well and thank her for all she has done for St Francis youth. The photo on the back cover shows how many attend the meetings.

However, the Oasis Youth Group is not closing down: it will be led by three of Megan's faithful and well trained leaders – Kay-Leigh Evans, Megan Lowes and Leigh Grindley-Ferris – until the end of the year, when the church council will decide on making an appointment.

## St Francis Pudding Stall at the Irene Homes Fête

One makes extraordinary decisions on the spur of the moment. Thus it was that Margie Couper and I agreed on 1 May 2009 that we would run the next St Francis Pudding Stall at the Irene Homes fête.

A year later, we were faced with the task of collecting enough sweet things to make the stall possible. The Friday before the fête, I was very relieved to see the parish fridge filling up with the generous contributions of several parishioners. On Saturday, in spite of threatening rain, Margie, Jill and I were able to sell 'Three puddings for R7' to the faithful supporters of the Homes and raise R2 000.

This will contribute to the running costs of a truly Christian institution, which provides care for up to 85 mentally challenged ladies. Margie's decoration of the stall with posters, balloons and bright notices drew attention to the delectable puddings on offer. The surplus (including the two large bowls I had forgotten in the fridge!) was quickly sold after the 9:30 service. We are grateful that the stall did well, but hope that next year it will do even better.

**Elizabeth Bojé**



## **God the Refiner and Purifier**

*He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. (Malachi 3:3)*

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible Study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: 'He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.' She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, 'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?' He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy – when I see my image in it.'

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

**Submitted by Ponty Thuynsma**



## **A Grace before Supper**

The Black Sheep Bible Study group always has a light supper before we discuss our theme and, over the years, have developed a Grace to be said before we start. Perhaps other house groups would like to see it.

**Tony Williams**

O Lord,

We give thanks to you for all our blessings, and trust that you will give us grace to love and care for each other in continuing this form of fellowship. We thank those in your service who have prepared this food, both to nourish our bodies and to create a setting in which your Holy Spirit can help our group grow in faith through the privilege of Bible Study.

While we give grace to you, our Father, who loves us and by your grace gives us eternal encouragement through the teachings of your dear Son, we commend to your loving safe-keeping all those unable to read, without access to spiritual or bodily nourishment, or who are prevented in any way from drawing together in holy fellowship.

Come Holy Spirit, reach into our silence, touch our speechlessness, kindle our longing and fire our words with God's truth – that all may be fed in their own ways through the hearing of His mighty works, whereby He now draws us to Himself. We await with excitement all you have in store for us after this meal.

We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**The Black Sheep House Group**

MEMORIES

by John Mallory

John Mallory worshipped at St Francis for many years, serving more than once as church warden. He now lives at Haartebeestpoort Dam and attends the Methodist Church there, which is the most convenient for him. Many of St Francis parishioners remember John fondly and enjoyed his slide shows and talks on Mt Everest, which he visited many years after his father George Mallory disappeared near the summit. John climbed as far as Base Camp in Nepal, despite having had hip replacements!

With my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday not far away, I have been looking back over the years to think what have been the most significant events in my life.

But first, let me give you some background. I was about two months short of four years old in 1924 when my father was lost attempting to climb Mount Everest.<sup>1</sup> This led to us – my mother, my two sisters and I – moving to my mother’s family home and living with my grandfather, then a little over 70, and my aunt. So I grew up in a large house with 5 acres of garden in which to play. My grandfather was an architect and had built this beautiful house, largely on money provided by his wife’s family. It had been completed in 1900 and had cost over six thousand pounds. Today I think you could not build such a house for a million!

I attended two boarding schools – from the age, I think, of seven and a half – for a little over ten years. Both were church schools. We attended chapel twice every day at my first school, and every morning and evening, on Saturdays and Sundays as well, at the second. During these years I was confirmed and had plenty of religious instruction, but it was only when I was at Cambridge during the first year of World War II that I first committed my life to God.

There I was persuaded to attend evangelistic meetings arranged by CICCUC (Cambridge Inter Collegian Christian Union). That was when

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Mallory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Mallory)

my life began to be radically changed. I was even used by God to bring at least one other person to a similar experience.

After only the one year at Cambridge, I was called up for service (because of the war) with the royal Engineers. I applied to be considered for a commission and was sent to India for the needed training. At that time the Indian Army was growing from the peacetime number 200 000 to about 2 million and they were looking for officers. In due course I was commissioned and posted to the Bombay Sappers and Miners with its headquarters at Kirkee, a suburb of Poona.

At the time the Corps of Indian Engineers comprised three regiments: the Bombay, the Madras and the Bengal Sappers and Miners. One good friend had a similar posting. Both our first assignments were with training battalions where raw recruits were taught to be soldiers. For a few months I was under someone who passed on to me all he knew, so when he was moved on I was well able to take over as company commander.

It was in this period that my friend lent me a book entitled *Innocent Men*. It was, in fact, about a movement I had certainly heard of, the Oxford Group. In 1938 the movement's initiator called for moral and spiritual re-armament as the one hope of avoiding war, at a time when the nations were busy re-arming, anticipating war. The name stuck and the movement became known as Moral Re-Armament, later abbreviated to MRA.

Two things especially struck me in the book. It spoke of receiving God's guidance, of being quiet and allowing God to put thoughts, instructions, into your mind. It also gave me a vision of something far greater than personal salvation – a vision of a world rebuilt as people discovered God's plan for themselves, for their families, their businesses, their nations.

I asked my friend how I could be a part of this, well knowing I must, at least, make a new commitment of my life to God, for I had slid back a long way from my Cambridge new beginning. He invited me that weekend to visit long-time members of MRA who lived within easy cycling range. They were Don and Ann Robertson. Don had been serving as a medical missionary in India for quite a number of

years, and was then serving in the Indian Army's Medical Service. I asked Don how I could become a part of what I had read about. He gave me three steps to follow:

1. Take time to let God show you all the places where your life fails to live up to the standard of absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love, and write down what He shows you.
2. Share this all with someone you trust, then ask for God's forgiveness, and then surrender all you know of yourself to all you know of God.
3. Then take time every morning to listen to God, who will show you where you have gone wrong, and He will show you what He wants you to do, thus giving correction and direction.

Well, I did all that and my life was considerably changed. At a time when few British officers in the Indian Army got to know any Indians apart from those serving under them and the few Indians who became commissioned officers, my new friends were enabling me to meet and get to know civilian Indians.

One of the first I met, during a weekend leave in Bombay, was Krishna Prasada. He had been a member of India's Davis Cup tennis team and was, when I met him, Director of Post and Telegraphs for Bombay province, and before long was promoted to be the Director General of Indian Post and Telegraphs for the whole country. He had a nephew, Ragunath Prasada, living in Poona, and he asked me to see if I could help his nephew find for himself the sort of change which he had experienced. I, with others who knew MRA, got to know Ragunath and his wife, Tosh.

On one visit to their home, it was evident all was not well between them. She did not like all the time he would spend working on their car. We suggested we all be quiet and take time to listen to God, and write down what we believed He was telling us. I remember well the thought I had was: 'Ragunath loves his car more than his wife.' I thought I could not possibly share such a thought – I would be thrown out of the house. But the thought was clear and strong that I should indeed share this thought. So I did. Ragunath was quite shattered. And Tosh said that that was what she had suspected! But

God knew exactly what was needed and that day was the beginning of a much happier marriage.

I became a good friend of the Prasadas, often having supper with them, learning to eat Indian fashion, but never learning to enjoy their very spicy, hot food! It was in my last year in India that the Prasadas invited some of us to spend Christmas with them. Being Hindus they did not know what would be the appropriate way to celebrate Christmas. Well, I am sure we had a good meal and, I think, exchanged presents. We also did something I have not done at any other Christmas party – we all got to our knees to pray together.

Ragunath later became head of the Engineering Faculty at Alexandria University in Egypt and ended his career in India, where he rose to become the Director General of Civil Aviation. I had the joy of visiting him in his retirement home, back in Poona (now Pune!) 43 years after I had last seen him.

My decision to surrender my life to God and to work in fellowship with the MRA people led to my spending most of my life – nearly 60 years of it – in Africa.

**John Mallory**

The second part of John's Memories (some of his experiences in Africa) will be published in the next issue of *The Franciscan*.

## Andrei Rublev's Trinity Icon

The picture on the front cover is a reproduction of the Trinity icon painted in about 1410 by the Russian artist Andrei Rublev, which can be viewed today in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

Fr Timothy's sermon on Trinity Sunday, based on this icon, made a great impression on me, and probably on others in the congregation who (like me) had never seen or heard about the icon before. As a reminder of the sermon, here are some facts about the icon, taken from several articles I found on the Internet. (JGI: Just Google it!)

Several icon painters between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries depicted the Holy Trinity, drawing inspiration from the story told in Genesis 18 of the hospitality of Abraham, who was visited by three wanderers:

And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf that he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. (King James Version)

Most of the icon painters tried to include as many details from the story as possible: the three Wanderers (depicted as Angels) seated at a table on which are various dishes, Abraham and Sarah, the young man killing the calf, the tree, the house (tent), a rock... Rublev's icon is different in that he omits most of these extraneous figures or objects – apart from a stylised house, tree and mountain at the top of the picture, he concentrates on the three angels and the table.

His icon is full of symbolism. Blue is the colour of Heaven and all three angels wear a blue article of clothing. The figure on the right (the Holy Spirit) also wears green, which represents New Life. The Spirit touches the table, thus earthing divine life. Behind him is the mountain, reminding the viewer of the 'mountain top' episodes in the Bible, when God appeared to man.

The middle figure (Christ) wears a brown robe symbolising his humanity, while the gold stripe over his shoulder represents kingship. He touches the table with two fingers, showing his dual nature (human and divine), and points to the chalice of wine (symbol of the Eucharist), the only object on the table. Behind him is the oak tree of Mamre, which also recalls the tree on which he was crucified.

God the Father sits on the left. Over his blue robe he wears a golden cloak. He does not touch the table, but holds the staff of authority (over heaven and earth) in both hands. Behind him is the house, recalling the promise of Jesus: 'In my father's house are many mansions – I go to prepare a place for you.'

Look at the picture again, particularly at the faces of the three angels – the slant of their heads and the direction in which each is gazing – and you will remember what Fr Tim had to say about this in his sermon, or you can arrive at your own conclusions, if you missed the sermon...

**Jill Daugherty**

News from Martzi – I sent her a copy of the Easter *Franciscan* and she wrote to thank me. If you would like to drop her line, do ask me for her address.

Phillip is still in Pretoria, finalising matters here, so she is staying with her son Dietrich, his wife Heather and their two young sons in New Canaan, Connecticut. As they lead busy lives and don't always manage to get to church on Sunday, Martzi gets a lift from other parishioners of St Mark's Episcopal Church in New Canaan, where she is worshipping, and so has met several people. She is happy with the leadership and spiritual guidance at St Mark's. If you Google the town and then the church, you'll see that St Mark's has a very modern and beautiful building and offers many activities.



Oasis Youth Club at Megan's Farewell Braai