Community Routes

Alnmouth Friary: 50 years of ministry
Desmond Alban writes:
The brothers at Alnmouth celebrated their 50th Anniversary on the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 15 August 2011. Somehow we sat over 100 people in the chapel in reasonable comfort, and the enthusiastic singing was swollen by more guests in the narthex beyond. We celebrated with a festal Sung Eucharist at which Bishop Frank White (Assistant Bishop of Newcastle) presided and Brother Samuel preached. The congregation was made up of many friends, old and young, and the lovely weather allowed everyone to enjoy a picnic lunch in the friary garden. Indeed, the main celebrations ended with Evening Prayer in the open air, just before we welcomed the new guests arriving that day for 'business as usual'.

CIR, 2011
The International Interconfessional Congress of Religious (CIR) met in Triefenstein from 25-30th June 2011.

Some fifty delegates met in a Bavarian castle in Triefenstein overlooking the River Main and home of the Christustraeger Brothers. Anglicans, Catholics, Evangelicals and Orthodox shared a beautiful variety of worship and meals, stories, lectures and outings. The five days were sensitively and humorously chaired by Fr Nicholas Stebbing CR and simultaneously translated into French and German; encouraging us to dust off our O-level language skills.

The CIR explored how religious life might start to take a lead in ecumenical relations and highlighted how little we often know about other traditions. One thing that came across consistently was that others tend to be confused by the spectrum of the Anglican church - which was very well addressed by one of the papers.

Both Sue and Martin John thoroughly enjoyed the conference and would hope to attend another time.

Third Order at Greenbelt
Brian Berry TSSF Communications Co-ordinator, writes:
For the first time the Third Order had a visible presence at the Greenbelt Festival, held from 26 to 29 August at the Cheltenham Racecourse. The theme this year was "Dreams of home". A quote from Frederick Buechner's book The Longing for Home, which was included in the Welcome Letter to all 2011 Greenbelters, aptly describes the essence of this theme: "No matter how
much the world shatters us to pieces, we carry inside us a vision of wholeness that we sense is our true home and that beckons to us”. It was appropriate that we were there to share the Franciscan vision of wholeness.

A number of tertiaries are regular Greenbelters but it was only last year that we arranged to meet as a distinct group. This year Chapter agreed that the Third Order could have its own stand in the G-Source tent. A new coloured banner, enquirer's leaflet, table cloth and display board were specially prepared for the occasion; and fifteen tertiaries volunteered to look after the stand, taking two-hour turns to hand out leaflets and sample copies of TO publications, and to answer questions from visitors to the stand.

During the course of the exhibition a number of tertiaries from all over the country paid us a visit. This confirmed our expectation that the stand would not only attract a range of visitors with little or no knowledge of the Third Order - it would also serve as a meeting point for Third Order members, both those who had volunteered to help as well as the "incognitos" who turned up unexpectedly.

Many of us attended the session on "New Monasticism" in which the Bishop Protector, Michael Perham, along with other panel members, was exploring "what it (New Monasticism) is and what it can contribute in a post-church and post-Christian age." The huge gathering for the Sunday morning Eucharist in front of the Main Stage provided another opportunity for a tertiary get-together as did the Morning Prayer sessions led by the SSF brothers in Soul Space on the top floor of the Grand Stand. The SSF tent was yet another Franciscan rendezvous.

Everyone who took part agreed that organising a Third Order presence at Greenbelt was a worthwhile exercise and should be repeated next year.

**Formators’ Conference, UK.**

Desmond Alban writes: The third and final part of our three year International Formators' Programme saw sisters and brothers from all the provinces gather this year in the UK, following our previous meetings in New York and Boston, and the Solomon Islands. The focus this time was on the foundation and early history of our communities and on our Anglican identity. We began in Plaistow, East London where the first Anglican Franciscan Order, the Society of the Divine Compassion, had its origins, and where SSF brothers still live and work. (1) The founding brothers are all buried in the nearby East London Cemetery, with the grave of Fr James Adderley, who did not remain in the community, nearby.

Based in Southwark for a few days we made pilgrimage to other sites of significance such as the Church of Our Most Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell, where CSF had its origins, and the Chapel of St Edward's House, Westminster (Society of St John the Evangelist) where the first SSF novice was admitted. At Lambeth Palace we passed through the magnificent gateway and to the archive, where we viewed some fascinating early SSF documents. At Parliament Square we were reminded of Brother Douglas'
important political lobbying and campaigning on behalf of wayfarers. In each place our community historian, Dr Petà Dunstan, brought the story alive for us, not least by posing a question to consider for our contemporary Franciscan life and formation.

The historic pilgrimage continued with a visit to the historic Bartlemas Chapel in Oxford, in medieval times a place of welcome and refuge for lepers and the place that Brother Giles chose to begin his work with wayfarers before moving to Hilfield. We followed in turn to Dorset where Brother Anselm welcomed us in the names of Brother Douglas and Father Algy, and Petà enlightened us further. The markings in the courtyard concrete bear witness to the experimental school community, 'The Little Commonwealth', which preceded the arrival of the brothers.

We stayed at Hilfield for the second week of our conference, this time with stimulating input from Dr John Cator, from California, who helped us think in depth about what it means to be Anglican Christians. We also enjoyed sharing in the contemporary life of the community at Hilfield, with haymaking, home grown entertainment and even the baptism of Richard and Chantal's daughter, all part of our time there.

**Round up**

Benedict moved to Leeds at the beginning of August. During September, Vaughan moved from Glasshampton to Plaistow; and Christopher Martin and Joseph Emmanuel moved from Alnmouth to Glasshampton. Gerardo has withdrawn from the novitiate. Alan Michael has been released from membership of SSF.

The Candidates' Panel has agreed to Helen Julian's request to be accepted for ordination training. Helen Julian has also been elected Minister General of CSF and will take up office on 8 February 2012. At the time of this issue of franciscan going to press, the sisters in the European Province were in the process of electing a new Minister Provincial.

Novice Sister Clare left Freeland at the beginning of September, to join the Benedictine noviciate at West Malling Abbey, Kent.

Ken Norian, previously Minister Provincial for the Third Order in the Province of the Americas, has been elected Minister General of the Third Order SSF.

Jude wrote from America that when Storm Irene hit Long Island, NewYork, near the end of August it shook Little Portion Friary. A tree came down in the drive with various branches all over, the chapel/basement flooded and there were other oddments of damage. There was no electricity supply for over a week, but no other significant damage and the brothers were all safe.