

Community Routes

Making History

In September 2008 CSF gained two new sisters in South Korea, when Frances and Jemma, then of the Korean Franciscan Sisterhood, applied to join us. Their Life Profession took place on 8 September 2009 and was an historic occasion; the first life professions of Anglican Franciscans in South Korea. The small church of St John in Gumi was packed, with people standing in the vestry, the kitchen, and the landing and stairs. Among those who attended were two sisters from the Society of the Holy Cross, the community where Frances and Jemma started their religious life. The Bishop of Busan received their vows, and the priest at St John's, Fr Jonathan Kim preached. He and the congregation of St John's have been very supportive of Frances and Jemma since their arrival in Gumi in 1999.



The reception afterwards took place in a nearby Buddhist centre, with a wonderful array of food, and speeches from a number of participants including Frances and Jemma themselves. Beverley, Pamela Clare, Helen Julian, Joyce, Christopher John and the Korean Franciscan Brotherhood brothers were excited to be there for the occasion. The day ended with all the Franciscans back at the sisters' apartment for a time of relaxation together as Frances and Jemma opened their cards.

The following day there was a joint meeting with the KFB brothers, with Christopher John acting as interpreter, and the first meeting of the Regional Chapter of CSF in Korea, which nominated Frances as Deputy Minister. The joint meeting set up a working group to continue the work of translating the European Provincial Statutes and also an updated version of the Australia - New Zealand Statutes, as the KFB has made its SSF connections via the ANZ province. Altogether it was an historic 24 hours, and an exciting start to a new chapter in CSF's story.

Pass the Word

Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage

Maximilian writes:

For five days in August, 800 young people, with their priests and youth leaders pitched camp in grounds close to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, to take part in the annual Youth Pilgrimage. The theme was "Pass the Word", encouraging young people to engage with the Bible. A sea of tents built up around a full sized circus Big Top, which was the focus for a daily concelebrated Mass and evening acts of worship. The emphasis was to have fun, but the business of promoting growth as Christians was always in view. The Shrine Administrator, Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS, led this event throughout, but his daily Bible study was particularly popular. The excellent worship group CJM provided music which served the liturgy with great sensitivity, ranging from quiet reflection to rocking praise! A Ministry Team of

young adults collaborated with Shrine staff to form the themed material for the week.



Throughout the Pilgrimage an open Bible was placed on a raised lectern in the middle of the Big Top. Around the lectern cascaded a fountain of water; Living Water flowing from the Living Word. A particular highpoint of the Pilgrimage was an all night prayer vigil. Groups of young people signed up to spend time in prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed on an eight feet high ziggurat. There, accompanied by their friends and sleeping bags they kept vigil beneath the spotlight monstrance surrounded by candlelight.

The statue of Our Lady of Walsingham remained in the Big Top throughout the week. This seemed particularly appropriate, as Walsingham recalls the time of Jesus' childhood and youth as he grew in faith and self understanding. Under Mary's care, 800 young souls renewed and made new friendships, laughed, shed the occasional tear, prayed, and all this in an atmosphere of irrepressible joy. The encouragement received from this event will, God willing, support them in their own faith journey, so they can "Pass the Word" in their own situations.

New York, New York



For over three weeks last summer, fourteen sisters and brothers from five countries and seven provinces of C/SSF came together in the United States to give shape to a vision that had emerged through the international First Order Chapter meetings in Australia in 2008. That vision, arising simultaneously across our provinces but coming together at the meeting in Australia, was to deepen and enhance the experience of brothers and sisters as they learn our life and make it their own during their early years in SSF, as novices and members in First Profession. To that end, delegates from across the world - from the Ministers General to members only just in First Profession themselves - met to write an International Curriculum for Initial Formation. If that sounds like a lot of hard work in a classroom then yes, at times that was what was needed, and the Conference Room at Little Portion Friary, Long Island, was papered with flip-chart notes as we shared and honed our thoughts and ideas from our work in small groups. We were aided in the task though with stimulating input from a bewildering array of experts, too many to mention them all. They ranged from a School District Supervisor (Wendell Chu) and an experienced Marist Formator (Don Bisson) to the homeless folk we worshipped with in parks in Harlem and Boston, taking in along the way a campaigner for workers' rights (Lucas Benitez who founded the Coalition of Immokalee Workers), Franciscan Brothers and Sisters in Roman Catholic

Congregations, young interns learning about action for Environmental Justice, at least one eminent theologian (Dr Kwok Pui-Lan) and the residents of a Buddhist Monastery.

Some of that input helped us to set our sights during the first week's work at Little Portion, and others helped us in the last week as we finally drew up the written Curriculum that has now been distributed right across our communities. In between though, we were 'on the road', exploring Franciscan themes of environmental justice, social justice, and ecumenical and inter-faith relations. First stop was New York City, and it was great to worship with the congregation of St Mary's Harlem, some of us spending the nights on the floor of their church hall.

Our meeting with the West Harlem Environmental Initiative nearby included a memorable 'Toxins and Treasures' tour as the effects of the inefficient and inequitable treatment of New York's sewage waste and bus depot diesel fumes on the inhabitants of the poorer end of Manhattan Island were explained to us. We also met with the Poverty Initiative at Union Seminary. Moving on to the mountain at Graymoor, above the Hudson Valley, we were welcomed by the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement at their foundation house. They took us to the nearby Chuang Yen Buddhist Monastery and also to the Franciscan Missionary Sisters in Peekskill where the sister who founded CSF, and later left to become a member of the congregation at Peekskill, is buried.

At Graymoor we prayed in the Chapel where the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity saw its inception. Going on to Boston some of us stayed with the Society of St John the Evangelist and all of us enjoyed their guest facilities for some of our meetings. Our worship in the park, as it had been on the Sunday afternoon at Harlem, was under the auspices of Ecclesia Ministries, bringing people together in a church for the housed and the un-housed. As well as worshipping at that 'Common Cathedral' we also attended the 'Common Cinema' one afternoon, helping to microwave the pop-corn but also enjoying the Chinese Martial Arts movie which was that day's main feature!

It wasn't all work, work, work though; there were opportunities for sight-seeing in Boston and whilst 'at home' on Long Island. It was great to head down town on 4th July to enjoy the New York City fireworks in a holiday crowd of countless thousands. Best of all though was to live, work, cook, eat, pray and play together with brothers and sisters from such a diversity of backgrounds as we pursued our common vision.

The 2009 meeting was planned as the first of a whole series of future events in a new International Formation Programme. For those of us privileged to attend this time it will be fondly remembered as a truly formative experience, and one we hope will bear fruit across the provinces.

Round up

Following his move to Canning Town, Martin John returned to Alnmouth to make his First Profession on 15 October 2009. Damian is to move to Hilfield

in January following his final service as Vicar of Holy Island on Christmas Day. Benedict has moved to Doncaster. Eric Michael arrived at Hilfield from the Province of the Americas in September to begin a year in the European Province. Nathaniel Gari has returned to Papua New Guinea. John visited Zimbabwe in October to attend the Chapter of the Community of the Divine Compassion in Nyanga.

Polly has withdrawn from the CSF novitiate.

Beverley has been accepted for ordination training and has begun a two year part time course at Queen's College, Birmingham. *f*