

## Community Routes

### The Same Call



*Beverley writes of a recent visit to Korea:*

The national flower of Korea, the Mugunghwa, or Rose of Sharon, is a tenacious flower. The name stems from the Korean word 'mugung' meaning immortality reflecting the enduring nature of Korean people. Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism have all played a role in the country's development. Christianity has taken a long time to be part of life in Korea, but about 25% of people are now Christian, and numbers are growing rapidly.

The Korean Franciscan Sisterhood (KFS) a religious community for women within the Anglican Church in Korea, was founded in 1999 and entered into a covenant with CSF in 2003. I became their Mentor in 2005, and visited Korea in August 2006. My aim was to continue to build up relationships with them, to live pray and work alongside them, and to provide space and opportunity for conversations on the Franciscan way of life.

My four week visit began in Gumi, where the sisters live. I preached at Bishop John Daly Mission Centre, and also shared with the Sunday School children; I spent quite a lot of time with members of the congregation through sharing impromptu meals, where there was a wonderful opportunity of getting to know people, enjoying each others' company, but also finding out the joys and sorrows in their lives as Frances and Jemma seek to support and help them. The sisters also work as volunteers in the Intensive Care Unit of the local hospital, caring practically for patients who have no one to care for them. As well as the pastoral work Jemma is building up a sewing business which is becoming a principal form of income for them.



We spent some time away, first travelling to Busan, to meet with Bishop Solomon Yoon, then spending two days at Yansen with Benedictine sisters Martha and Michaela. We went with them to Tongdosa temple, where Martha and I were invited to sit in the prayer hall for the time of evening prayer.

We also spent five days with the Korean Franciscan Brotherhood at Chuncheon participating in their life, and having a day out which included a boat trip and uphill walk to a temple in the mountains, where we met the chief priest who was very hospitable. A deep theological conversation ensued between him and Brother Stephen and Sister Frances. It was a very special moment for me, witnessing their interaction, and sharing a faith dialogue, joined by our common call to Community.

I spent 24 hours at a Catholic Benedictine Community near Gumi, where 'The Annunciation' (above) can be seen. It reminded me that as Mary heard and obeyed God's call, so we in faith are trying to live out the same call, with the challenge and courage it entails.

### **Our Sister, Mother Earth**

*Jennie writes about the C/SSF Formation Conference which was held at Compton Durville from 8-12 January:*

In all, some 15 or so Franciscan brothers and sisters of the First and Third Orders took part in this event. After a short introductory session, we were into three very full days. During the Tuesday we looked at the creation through the eyes of the bible, Francis and science. We were much inspired through the input given to us by our speaker for the day, Canon Darrell Weyman. We were led to look again at Genesis, chapter 1: 'God saw everything he had made and behold it was very good'. Francis reminds us that all creation has value in itself. Its value is not determined by its beauty or usefulness. It is of value because God made it and loves it. The previous two sentences include us because, after all, we are also God's creation.

On the Wednesday we went to the Carymoor Recycling and Environmental Centre. It was a very interesting visit. We saw how quickly the landfill sites are being filled up and how necessary it is to reduce the amount that we throw away. On site they also showed us how the food and garden waste were each separately recycled, taking twelve weeks to become useable garden compost. The 'leachable' liquid from the process was carefully filtered through sand and reed beds until it was able to sustain life in the ponds on the site and then gradually released into the river. At the centre were two eco-



friendly houses, one made with straw bales and a turf roof and the main one made of wood with solar panels and light sensitive panels. We spent 2 - 3 hours there but there was so much to see we could have stayed longer. In the evening, Liz and Colin Wilfred did a visual presentation

based on the Canticle of the Creatures, which brought our busy and muddy day to a meditative ending.

Thursday saw input by Hugh and a showing of the Al Gore DVD 'An Inconvenient Truth', which was well worth seeing. Oswin Paul offered an alphabet of things to look at to help us to be more aware and responsible and willing to make changes to our usage of the world's resources. As these are not infinite, it was encouraging to know that even little changes can make big differences. As the slogan says, Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, please.

### **Bingo!**

On the edge of an outer housing estate in England's second city stands a run down and tatty community hall, built, like the estate, fifty years ago and since, like the estate, neglected - until conditions became so desperate that 'regeneration' was forced upon the City Council in a grand political gesture.

Everything is marginal, on the edge. The church has turned its back and is nowhere to be seen.

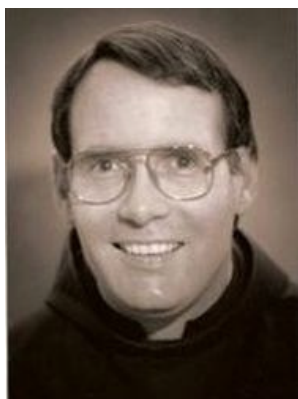
Yet - the gloom is not unrelieved. There are in the community fighters for just that - community. One such lady is at the centre of a club which has met for many years in the hall; about forty members assemble around midday on Tuesdays for an invariable ritual - tea, chat, sale of raffle tickets, lucky numbers, deposits and withdrawals in the savings which may be for Christmas or the summer holiday, the raffle, and then from 2 till 3, Bingo.

The modest sums raised accumulate and are spent on summer outings, the Christmas dinner, a group summer holiday in an Eastbourne hotel. Many members live alone now, all have memories of the hopeful early days of the estate. Most remember the Sunday school of their childhood in the churches of the city centre. The organiser is from a Methodist family some of whose members were lay preachers.

By chance, a brother of SSF of suitable age (advanced!) was invited to drop in from time to time and found a warm welcome, and a place at the Christmas dinner and in the weekly club which he attends about once a month. He, as a guest, a mascot, a 'chaplain', feels that he is able, however tangentially, to bring a dimension to the experience which speaks to them of the God whom the church supposes them to have abandoned when they stopped going to church. He believes that in the mutual concern among them, the laughter, the sheer enjoyment, God is not far away.

### **May they rest in peace . . .**

The last edition of franciscan mentioned only briefly the deaths in November 2006 of two of the Sisters of the Second Order at Freeland: Patricia had served more than once as Abbess (formerly "Mother") of the community, a position she held at the time of her death. As such she was known by many through meetings and Franciscan gatherings, and is remembered with admiration and affection. Gillian Clare shared valuable insights into the life of the Clares in an article she wrote for that same edition of franciscan, but the editors were pleased to hear that she had seen and approved the first proofs of the magazine before her death. She wrote in the conclusion of her article "For a religion concerned with incarnation nothing is as valuable as the personal contacts which embody the shared spirit, and lead us on together". The truth of her words is borne out in the experience of all who were privileged to meet personally with these two sisters.



Then, in December, the news came of the sudden deaths of two brothers. Justus, who died on 13 December aged 58, joined SSF at Mount Sinai, New York, in 1973 and amongst many other positions of responsibility served as Minister Provincial of SSF in America from 1993 to 2002. In the last three years of his life Justus was living in Papua New Guinea and at the time of his death, in the Mount Hagen region of that country, he was serving as Principal of Newton

Theological College in Popondetta. He is remembered too for a wide variety of ministries in the USA, and notably his presence and assistance every afternoon at Ground Zero in New York from the day of the 9/11 outrage until the closure of that former World Trade Center site.



Also in PNG, Timothy Joseph died suddenly on 17 December aged just 48. He had joined SSF in 1976, was later ordained and served as Deputy Minister for the PNG Region. He had lived for some time also in both the Solomon Islands and Australia and it was in Stroud that he was first able to explore a particular vocation to the eremitical life. In his last eight years he lived at a hermitage at Dipoturu, on the lower slopes of Mount Lamington. In Justus' last words, "[nothing] is a waste, but we fulfil the ministry we are called to do in Jesus. Thank you."

**. . . and rise in glory.**

### **Round up**

In February, Helen Julian was re-elected as Minister Provincial of the European Province of CSF and Paula was elected Abbess of the Community of St Clare.

Liz has been elected to profession and the ceremony will take place on 20 April. Nan has begun a period of leave of absence, for health reasons. Angela Helen and Geoffrey have recently moved into residential care. *f*