

Patricia Jordan FSM  
**An Affair of the Heart**  
***A Biblical and Franciscan Journey***  
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*Gracewing, Leominster, 2008, £7.99*

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**Come Apart And Rest For A While**  
ISBN: 978 085244 691 1  
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'An Affair of the Heart', while based on the author's doctoral thesis: "A Spirituality of the heart in the context of the Franciscan eremitical tradition", is markedly devotional in character.

Sister Patricia commends to her readers a wholehearted exploration of God's unconditional personal love. She elucidates the biblical concept of hesed (steadfast love) drawing particularly on Hosea, and considers the place of the heart in the Bible, the Fathers, and the Franciscan tradition. Lastly she explores hermitage experience in early Franciscan writing. Each of her five chapters concludes with four sections of Invitations to Prayer: scripture quotations; questions and suggestions for reflection; psalms using Merrill's Psalms for Praying; and prayers of St. Francis.

'Come Apart and Rest for a While' is a guide for people visiting the "Portiuncula", a purpose-built hermitage complex in the grounds of the author's Franciscan Minoress convent at Clay Cross in Derbyshire. This imaginative new building and specially designed parts of the grounds were inspired by the author's study of early Franciscan eremitical life, her visits to the original Franciscan sites, and her "Franciscan solitude" experiences. The architecture, which is beautifully executed, incorporates clear references to places, stories and concepts drawn from early Franciscan writings. There is much symbolism.

The book is a devotional commentary on all aspects of the "Portiuncula", with many excellent photographs which enable it to serve as a resource for journeys made in thought and imagination to the original Franciscan sites, as well as for actual visitors to Clay Cross. The text is written in the first person, as if spoken by St. Francis as the reader's retreat guide. I found this device contrived and obtrusive, but evidently others have found it helpful. There are several suggestions for prayer while walking a labyrinth, and scripture texts for the mysteries of the Rosary. Photographs and scripture texts are supplied for the Stations of the Cross.

The author's style is somewhat cloying for my taste. That said, both books contain much useful material, and could be profitable retreat guides or resources for prayer. Although clearly connected, each volume will stand alone.

***Sue CSF***