

Bush Telegraph

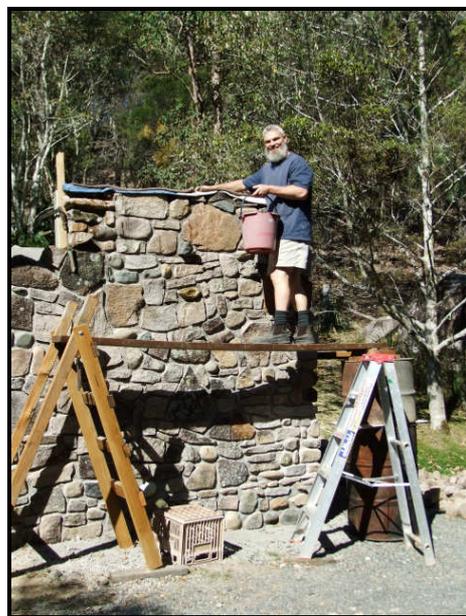
SUMMER 2013-2014

WORK

Work at the hermitage is essential and enriching both spiritually and physically. An insight into the thinking of many for whom work is essential but not enriching is revealed in a conversation between a Brother and a young butcher. The young man said he had been fishing over the weekend and the Brother inquired had he caught anything. He said, “no and it was disappointing, but a bad day fishing is better than a good day at work”.



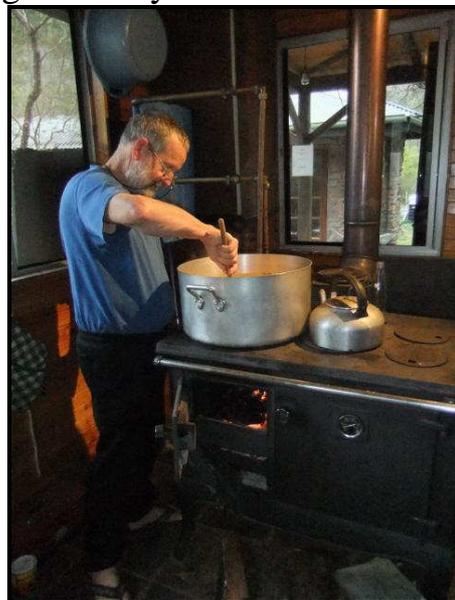
Brother Wayne working in the apiary with some help!



Brother Geoffrey building extension to the kitchen

All work at the hermitage is honoured as contributing to the well being and support of the Brothers, whether it's building a beautiful stone extension to the kitchen, working in the apiary, making jam and marmalade for sale, fencing, washing up.

We believe no work or activity is more important than another because it is all consecrated when God entered human history in the person Jesus of Nazareth. There for thirty years he lived, grew up and as an adult worked as a carpenter. These thirty years was followed by three short years of public ministry before his execution at the age of thirty three.



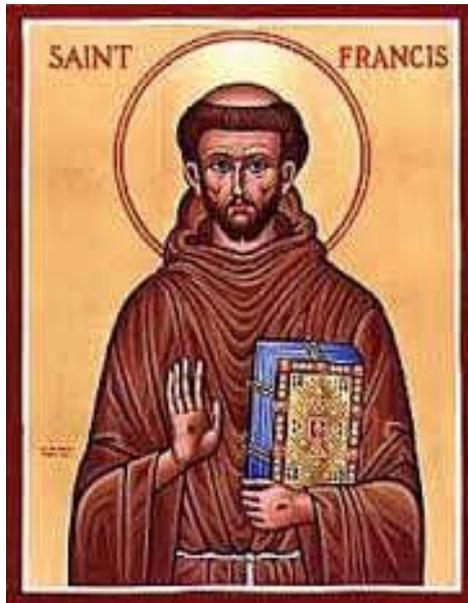
Brother Howard making marmalade to sell

The Little Poor Man of Assisi and MANUAL WORK

St. Francis valued manual work highly. In fact he stipulated that men joining the Brothers should bring their tools of trade with them. It was a way of identifying closely with the poor, whose very survival depended on the work of their hands. The Brothers had to earn their keep.

Francis was also very concerned that as the Order grew, it did not become a burden on the wider community. He envisaged the Brothers providing for themselves from their own gardens and that the buildings should be simple enough for them to construct themselves.

Work also had spiritual value in teaching the Brothers humility, following the example of Jesus who worked as a carpenter.



St. Francis' attitude to work is part of a long tradition amongst hermits and monks stretching back to the earliest Desert Fathers. Often repetitive work of making rope, sandals, and goods woven from reeds and palm leaves, provided the context for meditative prayer. It also meant they were supporting themselves rather than being a burden on the wider community.



WORK OF GOD

To love Christ is to love prayer, to be ready at every moment to drop everything and hurry to that place where God is about to speak his word to us and is waiting for our response.

The Work of God is what we call the Liturgy of the Hours or sometimes the Divine Office. At the hermitage the rhythm of each day begins before sunrise, then at sunrise, mid-morning, midday, mid afternoon, sunset, and before we go to bed in the evening.

Because the Liturgy of the Hours is woven around our daily life it gives us an opportunity to reaffirm our loving choice very concretely through the day. Whatever the demands of work nothing is more important than the one work for which we are Brothers and live in the hermitage – the Work of God.

This is so called not only because it is entirely devoted to God, but also and especially because God is himself at work in the heart which is open to him.

This is best illustrated by this story from one of the early documents about St. Francis. Francis would devote the greater part of the day and night to prayer, and even when he was travelling around on foot; he would always halt when he wished to say the Liturgy of the Hours.



But if he were riding because of his infirmity, he would always dismount to say the Office.

One day it was raining heavily, and Francis was riding because of his infirmity and pressing need. And although he was already drenched to the skin, he dismounted from the horse when he wished to say the Liturgy of the Hours, and said the Office standing in the road with the rain pouring down on him, as if he had been in a church or hermitage. He said to his companion, 'If the body likes to take its food in peace and at ease, although it becomes food for worms, how much greater should be the soul's reverence and devotion when it receives the food which is God Himself.'

Mirror of Perfection

The Liturgy of the Hours is at the centre of our life with God. It is a commitment with its challenges and obstacles, but we need to nurture prayer in all its rich dimensions, and see it as the most important thing in life. (Little Brothers of Francis)

THE TYRANNY OF THE URGENT

Searching for a Balance

It is often assumed that rural life is less demanding than life in the city. There is a difference between the country with its natural rhythm of day and night, winter and summer, droughts, floods and bushfires, and the city which has a rhythm of the week with its working days and the weekend. In the city the demands also vary according to the type of work one is engaged in, as it does in the country. However anyone living on a property can tell you there is always more work than you can fit into a day.



At the beginning of each year the Brothers have a planning meeting to organize major projects. As Franciscan Brothers seeking to live the contemplative life we endeavour to balance our practical and other work activities, guided by St. Francis Rule for Hermitages, the wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Jesus life and teaching in the four Gospels. In fact these sources inform all our decision making.

We also prayerfully commend to God what we think are the right priorities for us, not assuming anything.

Then we are able to draw a distinction between those things which are central and those that are peripheral to what we have decided is really important in our life.

SILLY SHEEP



paralysed: down: but not defeated

One of the problems we continually face at the hermitage is that of ticks. Young lambs are especially vulnerable, and the first for this year went down with tick paralysis when he was ten days old. As he was unable to stand one of the Brothers had to get his mother into the yard and hold her against the fence while another Brother held the lamb up to her teat to get a drink. It was stressful for all concerned! However as the lamb became stronger he and his mum devised a way of self-service. She positioned herself over him while he had a drink lying down. Silly sheep?

BUSH TELEGRAPH

As the name of our newsletter suggests we are dependent on the good will of others to pass it on, photocopy it and financially support it. We are grateful for those who do this and wish to thank them and encourage others to join us and them in the distribution of the Bush Telegraph.

Bush Telegraph

(An irregular newsletter)

Little Brothers of Francis

Franciscan Hermitage

Eremophila

PO Box 162, Tabulam, NSW 2469

www.franciscanhermitage.org

A Religious Order in the Anglican Church
in the contemplative tradition.
Protector: Bishop Godfrey Fryar

FRIENDS OF THE BROTHERS

It was the inspiration of Maxine Wolff, with the support of Fr. Dennis Claughton a long time friend, that a small group came together in Fremantle Parish W.A. to pray and raise funds for the Brothers.



Maxine and a friend

Later Canon Bruce Maughan founded the Little Brothers of Francis Incorporated which as the name suggests is a legal and more formal arrangement of friends. Recently Fr. Dennis Claughton has agreed to become the President of this group and at the same time encouraging informal groups of friends.



Fr. Dennis through Mission to Seafarers works with some of the most disadvantaged people who are crews on ships

Friends are the people who have made our grey Habits, given us accommodation when in Brisbane, set up and maintained our website, helped out with skilled handyman jobs, sold our jam and honey. All those things are beyond our skills and resources and things we cannot do ourselves, but are greatly valued by us.