



The Easter Cross of Flowers



# *Tidings*

April 2018 Easter  
St Francis of Assisi Parish Magazine

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### Foreword by the Editor

Many thanks to all who responded to the call for articles to fill this Easter edition. The articles are more about Lent than Easter, but this proves that Easter cannot be properly celebrated if we have not experienced the Lenten journey that culminates on Easter morning.

I must also thank photographers Diana Higgs, for the photo on the front cover that encapsulates Easter, and Terry Brauer, for the beautiful photo of the expectant parents on the last page.

This magazine can continue to exist only if you participate by submitting your reports of parish events and your thoughts and comments. The next issue will be in July, so don't wait for the deadline to be announced – send your contributions in early.

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**From the Parish Registers**

**Baptisms on 11 February 2018**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Parents</b>
Camryn Leigh Ann Bent	6 August 2005	Virgil & Melissa Bent
Njabulo Tumelo Gwaza	2 December 2007	Ambition Khumalo & Nhlanhla Gwaza
Nicole Leslie Harverye	3 April 1997	Joan Graham
Leano Noah Hilbrig	3 September 2017	Raphael & Kgomotso Hilbrig
Kabomo Ty Khechane	5 January 2017	Lehlohonolo Khechane & Christina Eguchi
Khumoetsile Letsholabyang Maimane	5 January 2017	Karabo & Brenda Maimane
Zach Mashonga	3 July 2016	Clemen & Sarah-Jane Mashonga
Khumile Sesoma Motlhabi	1 October 2013	Dikgang Makete & Karabo Motlhabi
Seeiso Mohlomi Motloi	20 September 2016	Mohau & Nobuhle Motloi
Zara Mackenzie Williams	26 October 2015	Corian & Patrice Williams

**The Faithful Departed**

<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>
4 March 2018	Didintle Mamopi Zoë Majake

## From the Desk of the Rector



### **Pledging, Tithing, Dedicated Giving**

*"Giving has always been a mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God's gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline of stewardship."*

Our God is a loving and generous God. We respond to that love in our worship, prayer, ministry and giving.

The ministry of St Francis is dependent on "dedicated giving" funds from its parishioners and other monetary gifts. The Old Testament measure for giving was a tithe (10%). Dedicated Giving is an intentional commitment to support the ministry of the Church financially.

What is stewardship? Stewardship is the prayerful work of managing our time, talent and treasure to bring about God's kingdom on earth. I believe that stewardship is a part of our spiritual journey and our relationship with God. Financial stewardship is an important component of a balanced spiritual life. Returning to God from that which God has given us is a tangible way to express our faith. When each of us gives as we are able, together we fund ministry within our church, to the community, and to the world. What is a pledge? A pledge is your commitment to make a financial gift that supports the mission of St Francis Parish Church. It is a response to God's call and abundance in our own lives; it is a statement of thanksgiving. A pledge is different from a donation or contribution. It is a commitment and an assumption of

responsibility. To make a pledge is to venture into a relationship. While the parish unquestionably needs our support to continue its mission and ministry, the act of pledging affects everyone who makes a pledge. The call to pledge invites us to rethink our relationship to our treasure, whether great or small. Are we willing to allow God to come between us and money? Can we say to God, "All that I have is yours," and then make that sentiment real with concrete action? Certainly, when we allow God into our lives, we also open ourselves to the transforming power of his generosity and love.

*What is the tithe?* Basically, it has always been defined as a tenth, or 10 percent, of one's income. Tithe, tithes, or tithing, are mentioned 39 times in the Bible, 32 in the Old Testament and 7 in the New Testament. Tithing (giving the first tenth or 10%) is a Holy Habit that should be the practice or goal of each member of St Francis.

Where you start or whether you tithe on your annual/monthly or gross income is not nearly as important as simply making your first pledge. Every pledge makes a difference, regardless of the amount.

Parishioners raise and lower their pledges all the time. A pledge is an estimate to help church budgeting; it is not a legal or moral obligation. Please don't let your uncertainty prevent you from making a pledge. If you have financial difficulties or other unexpected events, simply notify the Rector.

St Francis depends on your faithfulness and generosity. Our ministries are supported by the commitment you make. Please see the *Franciscan Monthly* March edition for the 2018 parish budget.

We are extremely grateful to all who make a pledge each year. Your commitment supports the work of Jesus Christ both within and beyond the walls of St Francis.

St Francis has been very blessed over the years by the wonderful generosity of the congregation. This has enabled the Church to develop many ministries, particularly among young people.

Part of being a good steward, or manager, of God's possessions is giving back to God a portion of what God entrusted to us, God's stewards. It's not that God needs our money. Rather, giving serves as an external, material testimony that God owns both the material and spiritual things of our lives. It also supports the greatest, most enduring work on earth: the work of the Lord – the mission and ministry to which God has called us.

One of the first standards of giving in the Bible is the tithe. Although the tithe is mentioned in the Law, no punishment was indicated for not tithing. Tithing has been, and always will be, a voluntary act on the part of God's people. Tithing with proper motives invokes God's blessings (Malachi 3:10).

Like every other facet of serving God, all giving – including tithing – should be done with the right attitude. When giving is viewed as a rule and is done out of a sense of duty, it becomes legalism. Like tithing, giving beyond the tithe should be an outward material expression of a deeper spiritual commitment and an indication of a willing and obedient heart. Just as the Macedonians did, Christians should give out of a grateful heart, with an attitude of joy (2 Corinthians 9:7) and because the Holy Spirit is prompting them – not as an emotional response.

The parish council sets a budget informed by the total amount pledged to the church the previous year(s). While plate offerings are important to the parish, your pledge lets the parish council plan more accurately for the ministry we can accomplish.

Determining the amount of your annual pledge is between you and God. However, as you make this important decision, reflecting on your vision of stewardship may be beneficial. We are to consider our personal vision of stewardship in terms of a spectrum:

- I give to return a portion of my blessings — a sense of gratitude
- I give to keep church ministries free to all — a sense of generosity

We give thanks and praise to God for everyone who has supported the church with their generosity over these many years. We are confident that as we serve the Lord and invest our treasure in the work of the Kingdom of God, greater things lie ahead. When you make an annual pledge to the church operating budget, you show your dedication to Jesus Christ and the church's ministries here and beyond. You are stepping forward to look after this church, our education programmes, our worship services, and our mission work. Every day of the year, this building and the people in it offer the Gospel, worship, pastoral care, and numerous other resources to all who seek them. Pledging is not a type of subscription or payment. We ask for a pledge so that the Holy Spirit may guide our elected church leaders to channel abundance through each and every one of us.

Stewardship is responsibility for taking good care of resources entrusted to one. At St Francis, we are being good stewards by taking care of each other and our neighbours through our financial support of our church family through an Annual Giving pledge. Additionally, we are good stewards by giving of our time, talent and energy to the many ministry opportunities offered at and through St Francis. We are all asked to give back joyfully to God in thanksgiving for the abundance God has given us through our **pledges** of time, talent and treasure! Share your Priceless Joy!!

Giving stems from our recognition that God's grace permeates our lives, and pledging to St Francis allows us to practise responding gratefully to that grace. It is the first step in cultivating a broader practice of generous living, shaping not only how we use our financial resources but also how we share our gifts of time and talent with others. Giving to St Francis not only enables the church itself to do good work; your gifts cultivate a community of generous people, the yeast that leavens the whole dough. (Matt. 13:33)

Many individuals choose to support St. Francis' operational budget through regular giving. Pledges are used to support the work of the

church, from the mundane (paying for crayons and light bulbs) to the exciting: the education of people in the gospel, uplifting worship, and outreach to people around the world through the General Assembly.

Everything the church does to show the love, justice and mercy of the Lord, to proclaim the good news of the gospel, and to carry out the mandates of Jesus Christ, is funded by the pledges of members.

*"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,  
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."*

1 Peter 4:10

*Oremus pro invicem* (Let us pray for each other.)

**The Ven Dr. L Meshack T Mariri †**

### **Our Easter Journey**

The Anglican Church thrives on tradition. We have a Liturgy which celebrates every aspect of Christ's life from birth to His Death.

Over the past fifty days, since Ash Wednesday, we have followed our Saviour Jesus through His last few weeks of life on earth. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent and falls on a different date every year depending on the date of Easter. At the Ash Wednesday service, as a sign of repentance, we were anointed with the ashes from last year's palm crosses. Then during Lent, in our own small way, we journeyed with Jesus in the Wilderness where He fasted for forty days. He suffered temptation, but firmly put Satan in his rightful place.

On Palm Sunday we celebrated His procession through Jerusalem, when He was hailed as the Messiah and rode over strewn palm branches. During Holy Week, through the Stations of the Cross, we agonized with Him as He staggered under the weight of the cross on His last walk along the Via Dolorosa to the crucifixion.

On Maundy Thursday we experienced his humility by washing each other's feet and got an indication of servanthood. During the all-night vigil we had the opportunity to remember the Last Supper and appreciate the significance of the sacrament of the Eucharistic meal. We wept with Him and shared His reluctance to take up His cross. However, through obedience to His Heavenly Father, He willingly accepted the shameful death He had to endure for the forgiveness of our sins. We cringed at the unfairness of His arrest, the torture, the humiliation and the insults He bore for our sake. During the Good Friday service we mourned and stood by Him while He hung and died a horrific death on the Cross.

Last night (Easter Saturday) we celebrated His rising from the dead. We lit the Paschal candle and renewed our Baptismal vows. Today we ecstatically celebrate His resurrection and share the joy and amazement felt by Mary Magdalen when she encountered Jesus ALIVE. Prophecies made centuries ago have been fulfilled. How can we not adore and worship a God who loves us so much that He gave up His life for our salvation.

Lord, you are strong, we are weak. Right through your life you never hesitated to put the needs of others first. Even in agony and death you consoled and took care of those you love. Help us to look to you for strength and support. Grant us the discipline to spend our lives striving to be more like you, to use our gifts to make a difference, no matter how small, in other people's lives.

Almighty and eternal God, we pray for your Church. Guide it and gather it together so that we may worship you in peace and tranquillity.

[...]

Grant us the faith to know you and love you, for you live and reign in the unity of the Holy Trinity, one God in glory everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of Lay Minister **Linda Lewis** on Easter Sunday

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## **Lenten Encounters at the Mission House on Wednesday evenings**

The rhythm of meeting each week during Lent and encountering the presence of God in ourselves and in each other was wondrous indeed. We often started the evening with practising the Act of the Presence of God, remembering that we were in God's presence and the reality of God's loving gaze on us. We rested in that for a few moments.

Following on from that, in silence, we did a review of the day that had gone past, noticing the moments when God had been most present to each one of us. Gratefully giving thanks for those experiences.

Also noticing when it was that each one of us experienced a lack of faith, hope and love, perhaps felt anxious, frustrated or resentful, and holding those moments up to the compassionate gaze of God.

Looking at the evening ahead, we held the time and our own desires up to God, perhaps asking Him to help us be more present to Him in our time together.

Each week had a different theme, with questions that assisted our dinnertime discussions.

The themes were: Desire, Repentance, Forgiveness and Healing.

### **Some feedback from those who attended:**

- Once again it was an informal and meaningful experience of engaging with scriptures, visual symbols and small group discussions around a shared meal. It was not just "what" is in the Bible, but more "how" we can interpret the scriptures for ourselves and grow through these parallel situations today. Our shared experiences and insights helped us to become aware of the transformative power of the gospels and Jesus's walk to the cross in our own lives. Having an open discussion around the table where we could trust in our shared faith, no matter where we found ourselves on the journey, was very special.

- The Encounters themselves and the flexible structure of the evenings created an awareness that stayed with us in the weeks in between the meetings.
- The Encounters with their creativity, good food and personal sharing were inspirational.
- The focus and having to express **how** God is present in my life was very helpful.
- The discussions during the meal were great and I would love to have more encounters in a similar format, with input and a facilitator to lead the conversations.
- To hear others' points of view and opinions was quite difficult on occasion, but I enjoyed getting to know new people.
- I enjoyed the fellowship, sharing, and getting closer to God.

We are so appreciative of those who attended and willingly participated. A special thanks to the cooks, facilitators and members of the team who held this sacred space throughout Lent.

**Monique Winn and Ezekiel 47 Team**



The handouts for the Lenten Encounters, being extracts from the above book including questions for discussion, were also used on Tuesday mornings during Lent, where they were the subject of the sermon. At this service, the congregation sit on chairs in the sanctuary rather than in the pews, and Fr Meshack sits just on the other side of the communion rail to give his sermon.

Moreover, those who attend Tuesday mass do so regularly, so they know one another well. This intimacy encourages dialogue and the sharing of personal experiences with the knowledge that these will not be disclosed to outsiders. It was comforting to realise that others also struggle with their relationship with God and with other people in their lives as they reacted with honesty to the probing questions.

**Jill Daugherty**

### **A Lenten Reflection**

with quotes from Richard Rohr Reflections and APB

*Thank you for blessing me with the gift of the world and making me in your image and creating me with the beauty of all things you made. I am grateful for the love you have shown me by placing me on this Earth with all the other things big and small. I love you God. Amen. (Tea Gonzales, St.)*

When God guided the evolution from simple primitive life, He crafted the skills, and more importantly the intellect, of each life stream. He did this through the souls he placed at the centre of creation, and this is part of our make-up.

*Creation is the order of love. God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things. (Pope Francis)*

He also gave humans the option of choice.

We also were gifted at our core with the core of standards, which included the responsibility to care for ours, and those around us. – ALL the creatures around us, animal and man, AND the elements of the environment. (They are also our neighbours.)

Humans choose to exploit the environment to the extent that the world is running short of water, and most animal species are endangered.

*The task of renewing Earth belongs to Earth, as the renewal of any organism [even the Church] takes place from within. Yet we humans have our own special role, a leading role in the renewal, just as we had the dominant role in the devastation.*

### From EGOcentrism to ECOcentrism

*We can fulfil this role, however, only if we move our basic life orientation from a dominant anthropocentrism [which manifests in egocentrism] to a dominant ecocentrism. In effecting this change, we need to listen to the voices of Earth and its multitude of living and non-living modes of expression. And not ignore the message of God.*

*Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'* (APB)

It is up to each of us to be driven by our gift from God.

Rev. June de Klerk gave each hospital visitor a prayer to guide them – it is one we can usefully say as we kneel at the communion rail:

*Lord God take me  
Lord God empty me  
Lord God use me*

**Hank Doeg**

### **Stations of the Cross**

The Stations of the Cross were recited at St Francis over the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of Holy Week. The services were a little over 30 minutes long and were led by lay ministers Rudi, Wendy, Linda, Adaora, Nadine and Gugu. It was a wonderful opportunity for the 7:30 and 9:30 lay ministers to get to know one other better and to work together. It was such a pity that so few members of the two congregations joined the lay ministers to relive the final walk of Jesus down the Via Dolorosa and His death on the Cross.

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The Parish office had printed handouts for the three services. Each service was led by three lay ministers. We did five stations on Monday, another five on Tuesday and the final four on Wednesday. A processional and a closing hymn were sung or recited and between the stations there were opportunities to meditate and dwell on the agony and hardship our Saviour suffered for our sake.

Reciting the Stations of the Cross is regularly practised in Roman Catholic churches, but is not an Anglican tradition. However, depictions of the various events that took place on the Via Dolorosa and at the Cross can be found inside St Francis of Assisi on the wall facing Albert Street. These were hung there a few years ago by Fr Timothy and, during Holy Week this year, coloured photos used at the three Stations of the Cross services were placed above them on the same wall. The text of the Stations can be found at the end of *Praying at Home*, a little book authorised by the Church of the Province of Southern Africa in 1994. The following summaries of the 14 stations come from this book:

<b>Station</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1	Jesus is condemned to death
2	Jesus receives his cross
3	Jesus falls the first time
4	Jesus meets his mother
5	The cross is laid upon Simon of Cyrene
6	Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7	Jesus falls the second time
8	Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem
9	Jesus falls the third time
10	Jesus is stripped of his garments
11	Jesus is nailed to the cross
12	Jesus dies on the cross
13	Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in the arms of his mother
14	Jesus is laid in the sepulchre

The Stations of the Cross were the services that made the biggest impression on me this Holy Week. As one goes through the various stations, you can almost feel the atmosphere that must have been prevalent that day. For the believers, the women who loved Him, there must have been a great sadness in their hearts. His mother undoubtedly suffered with him and for Him. For the unbelievers, there was hopefully shame.

One feels gratitude to Veronica, when she wipes Jesus' face to clean off the blood and perspiration that must have been dripping down His face, and to Simon of Cyrene, when the cross is passed to him, as well as relief that someone is helping Jesus bear the weight of the big cross. One can only be in awe when Jesus, despite His fear and suffering, consoles the women at the side of the pathway to Golgotha and, when hanging on the cross, He ensures that His mother is taken care of and finally assures the thief, hanging next to Him, that he will be with Him in eternity that same day. How reassuring to people in general. Jesus even asks His Father to forgive those that tortured, ridiculed and humiliated Him. When one sees the size of the nails that were hammered into His hands and feet, one cannot help but go cold imagining the intense pain each hammer blow brought.

We have such a loving, merciful and unselfish God, a God worthy of praise and worship, a God who it is impossible to describe!

**Linda Lewis**

**The Cross in the Middle** (Luke 23:26-43)

[...] On Golgotha there are three crosses: the cross in the middle is flanked by those of criminals. In the middle there is the cross of the Man of Sorrows.

Outwardly, the crosses look alike, but in essence they differ from each other as the dark night from the bright, sun-drenched day. The cross in the middle is actually meant for Barabbas, the biggest criminal of them all. The cross in the middle becomes the focal point of the universe, the center of our longing because of the Man hanging there: the Man of Sorrows. In Him, the guilt of all people is nailed to the cross.

Nevertheless, He is untainted and pure: Pilate testifies that he finds no guilt in Him; Pilate's wife says He is a righteous man; Judas declares that he has shed guiltless blood; His fellow-crucified declares that He has done nothing wrong; a Roman officer at the foot of the cross says: "*Surely this was a righteous man.*" (Lk. 23:47). In fact, it is *our* cross that He hangs from. He bears *our* guilt, sin and penance. That is the cross of redemption. Barabbas, here Jesus dies on your cross and you are exonerated. Here, all our guilt was redeemed – forever and ever. At the cross in the middle salvation, forgiveness and redemption by God were brought to pass. Let us kneel at the cross in the middle as if it were the gate of our city of refuge: Eternal life!

*Jesus, You have brought me peace with the knowledge that You have already appeared before the Father and borne His penance for sin. I praise and glorify you, Lord. Amen.*

This extract from *The Voice Behind You* by **Solly Osroveh** was submitted by **Ponty Thuynsma** who used this book for his daily readings during Lent.

### **God of Creation**

As I gaze upon the mighty oak tree  
Standing starkly etched against the darkening sky,  
I see an image of God.  
The God of Creation.  
God, who created you and me  
God, immanent and transcendent  
Roots reaching down into the ground of the world He loves,  
Branches reaching far above pointing to the heavens.  
Fathomless in wisdom,  
Ageless in beauty,  
Provider of food for the hungry.  
Refuge and home for all who come to Him.  
Haven and shelter from the storms of life.  
Dependable.  
Breathing out abundant life into the world,  
And I am reminded of another tree, standing on the hill of Calvary.  
And from his heart of love, he also gave the sacrifice,  
The Son of God, who dies for you and me.

**June de Klerk, 1997.**

### **Memories of June de Klerk**

June always regarded me as a member of her family and often greeted me and introduced me to others as her 'niggie'.

It was always interesting to visit June because she was well-read and she helped me in my growth as a Christian. Even though she later became housebound, which made it impossible for her to attend church, I had to report to Father June everything that was happening at St Francis. When she moved into Haven Village (where I live) towards the end of her life, she would phone me and, if I was not in, would just say, "This is June de Klerk". I knew this meant she wanted a visit.

I am sure she is now observing all our goings-on and would dearly love to make suggestions. However, our technology has not yet made this possible!

**Elise Lowes**

Like Elise, I also learnt a lot from June de Klerk – not just about faith and doctrine, but also practical matters, for instance when to genuflect in church. The only time one should genuflect before the altar is when the host (the bread and wine that represent Christ's body and blood) is on the altar – at all other times it is sufficient to bow one's head. It is therefore customary to genuflect before you go up to the altar to take communion and also whenever you enter the Lady Chapel where the consecrated host is kept.

June also once explained at tea after a service the reason why the English put milk in their cups before they pour in the tea. This is because a fine china cup could break if boiling hot tea is poured directly into it.

June was once a member of the house group to which I belonged. She was always keen to interpret the scripture passage we were reading, but was not always willing to accept another interpretation. Fortunately we were a bookish group, so had many resources at our disposal to prove that another interpretation was sometimes possible.

The only time I am aware of that June was unsure of herself was at a funeral she conducted at St Francis one day when the family draped a Union Jack over the coffin and requested that *God save the Queen* be sung. Even although she was British herself, she thought this was rather inappropriate, so phoned the Rector, Martin Breytenbach, for his advice. He told her to go ahead because *God save the Queen* was a hymn!

June's connection with South Africa began when she worked at the SA Embassy in London towards the end of World War II. After a

while she was offered a temporary post at Foreign Affairs in Pretoria. She stayed in a residential hotel in Arcadia where she met Barry de Klerk. Her son André, in the eulogy he gave at her funeral in December last year, said it must have been a strange courtship, because June did not speak a word of Afrikaans and his father spoke very little English. They overcame this language difficulty because they married and had five children. According to André, June eventually spoke excellent Afrikaans, with a vocabulary that exceeded his own, but she always spoke it with a pronounced English accent.

**Jill Daugherty**

### **Stork Tea for Charmaine**

One Sunday morning in March, Charmaine Mariri was lured to St Francis by her husband, our Rector Father Meshack, on the pretence that parishioners were giving the family a tea party to welcome them to their new parish.

Heatherlynn Lewis organised refreshments and, as always, the Franciscans rose to the occasion, bringing gifts for the new baby that was expected. A piggy bank was provided for those who did not bring gifts, but preferred to make cash contributions. No one knew whether it would be a boy or a girl, because the parents had chosen not to know the gender of their child before the birth. The occasion was well attended and enjoyed by all, including the Mariri family who went home laden with gifts for their eagerly awaited second child.

A little girl, Ororiseng, whose name means 'Praise God' in Setswana, was born on the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> March. This was Maundy Thursday, the day on which we commemorated the Last Supper. The word 'Maundy' comes from the Latin word *mandatum* meaning

‘commandment’, because during that meal Jesus gave his followers a new commandment:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

What a wonderful day on which to be born! I am certain that Otlotleng (whose name means ‘Honour Him’), who wanted a baby sister, was very excited and that Ororiseng will increase the love shared in the Mariri family and in the wider family of St Francis.

**Linda Lewis**

