

# Tau News- November 2009.

Celebrating spiritual diversity with the Natural World-the Franciscan Soul.

**Greetings to all soul workers.**

## OUR LATEST NEWS

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009** was another milestone for the Tau Community of St. Francis when several of our friends came together offering their time, skills and energy by formally setting up the League of Friends of the Tau Interfaith Franciscans Community? On behalf of the whole membership, we welcome their practical support in formerly establishing the Tau League of Friends as a constituted charity. Their primary object will be to provide the financial support for the Monastic Community within the Abbey as well as raise the capitol for our eco sustainable vision and project. If you are able to offer your services as a member of the League of Friends, then do e-mail us. Currently, the League would welcome the professional skills of an architect, legal person and retired financier to oversee the drawings for the new Project.

### **Our New Members of the Tau League of Friends are:**

Hon Chairperson: Richard Hopewell;  
Hon. Secretary: Evelyn Corral –Ruiz  
Hon. Treasurer: Brother Eric Batchelor  
Hon. Public Relations Officer: Elsie Hopewell Smith  
Hon. Fundraising Officer: Sr. Mary Batchelor  
Ex Officio Member: Jean Yates.

## IMPORTANT NEWS FROM OUR CUSTODIANS

Following a recent meeting of our Custodians, Mother Olivea with her fellow Custodians agreed to arrange an informal meeting with the Rev David Grey who had sought our advice re: long term support for his group of Lay Franciscans in the Gorton area of Manchester.

It was also agreed by the Custodians to reintroduce the Monthly Retreat/Support Group Healing Days for Therapists and Friends associated with the Sean Bradley Academy and Tau Community from November 2009. Sr. Theresa was duly nominated to oversee these arrangements with immediate effect. So, if any of you reading this wish to come along to an informal spiritual relaxation day where you can experience the Magdalene healing energies using touch and sacred oils. The days will be relaxed and informal beginning with a guided meditation and brief talk concluding with the afternoon being dedicated to members being empowered to self heal. For more information, please contact **Sr. Theresa** at: [TCOSF@aol.com](mailto:TCOSF@aol.com) (**Subject: Friend's Retreat Days**) The costs: **£35.00 non members** and **£25.00 Tau Members**. Homemade soup and fresh bread with refreshments from the Monk's kitchen are included. **See dates below.....**

**The Custodians have appointed Sr. Julie, our Hon. Secretary to oversee the Tau In House News and Views Newsletter** with effect from **December 1<sup>st</sup>**. If you have items of interest that we can use, then please email your suggestions, news items to Sr. Julie by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each month. Her email address is: [TCOSF@aol.com](mailto:TCOSF@aol.com)

From December, Mother Olivea has agreed to provide an informal update from the Custodians together with a spiritual reflection for our membership

## NEWS FROM OUR OBLATES

On October 4<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Feast Day of St. Francis, we welcomed our very first Intake of 10 new members who presented their hearts to their God by making a firm commitment to honour their Sacred Contract as Oblates before our newly appointed Mother Olivea, their Spiritual Mother.

Being an Oblate is a choice from the heart to honour the Divine within one's soul which keeps everything simple. The journey is not one of asceticism in hair-shirts looking glum and bereft; nor is it a religious conversion. It is a free choice given from their God to follow the dictates of their heart by leading a life devoted to Franciscan Spirituality, where meditation, prayer and mutual support will empower each committed Oblate to remain in their hearts. It is a journey that involves disciplining the ego which thrives on chaos and always wanting to process the language of self, about the self for self! Being an Oblate is a gentle introduction to finding one's spiritual comfort zone as well as a reawakening of the Divine in the Natural World-the Franciscan Soul.

Oblates are discouraged from any form of aesthetic practices which may incur 'OCB.' They are gradually introduced to forming a basic understanding of Mysticism whilst they rediscover who they truly are as a co creator of Source. Becoming an Oblate within our interfaith family does not adhere to religiosity or having to forsake one's identity through religious programming which occurs if and when one decides to enter a conventional religious monastery. Being a 'Tau Oblate' is to continue living with family and or one's partner in the modern world but remaining detached from its dramas remaining centred at all times in one's heart. It is a wonderful journey of exploring the mysteries of the ancient Mystical schools where the soul eventually embraces a deeply personal spiritual relationship with one's God and where this gives them an inner peace and focus from within their heart. In truth, those who meditate and pray daily and seek the company of likeminded spiritual brothers and sisters are essentially perceived as Oblates in the making!

Recently, we were guided, not to speak for the Oblates but, instead guided to ask our Oblates to speak up for themselves.....please read several of their replies.

-----  
Being an Oblate to me means to commit myself to a way of life that is prayer and being led by the spirit. Also to be open minded towards other Christians and those of other faiths I believe that it's not the religion you follow but following Christ and the way of love. Love and light. Sister Sue (**Blackpool, Lancashire**).

'What does an oblate mean to me?' You know me Sean, brief and to the point: It means to me becoming the best I can be. Living my life without fear or judging myself. Being able to stand alone but knowing that I am not lonely. Being able to come from a place of love and trust and realising that whatever happens in my life has been sent as a lesson in growth no matter how I feel about that. Being able to accept those lessons and then leave them behind for further challenges. Knowing that I deserve much more than I am willing to accept and being able to accept gracefully. Releasing some of my masculine energies and indeed accepting and connecting with the beautiful feminine energies which are inside me, but which I no longer have access to or remember about. Being whole and knowing I am protected at all times. Love and light. Sister Julie (**Arnside, South Lakes**).

For me, being an Oblate means I have guidance on my spiritual journey from someone who has so much more experience of spiritual practices and especially prayer than I have. It means being in a community of like-minded and similarly-practicing people, with whom I can share experiences, challenges, desires and know that I will be supported, encouraged, held by them. It means being supported to go through the barriers of habit, old stories and beliefs, unworthiness, which otherwise might derail my spiritual journeying - or wandering as Murray calls it!

It means having a regular reminder of what I have committed to. It means being given a focus for contemplation. ***What it hasn't done for me yet is supply a stunning shapely sexy and sensual woman who adores me - but I remain hopeful. It's not that I'm addicted to sex, or attached to having a mate, I just love the female form and enjoy having a mate, a buddy. And I remind myself to simply be with what wants to manifest. Love, as always.*** Brother Peter (**Cheshire**)

## HOME MADE PRODUCTS FROM MONASTERY KITCHEN

We are delighted to announce a new variety of chutneys to our Christmas range. Brother Sean has recently produced two specialist varieties from the Monk's Kitchen just for Christmas. They are: 1) The Christmas Chutney and 2) Hot and Spicy Pumpkin chutney. In total, there are now 32 varieties of Chutneys from the very HOT and Spicy to the mild and sweet varieties. We are running a special offer of 4 jars of our delicious homemade chutneys for **£10.00. Or, £3.00** per jar. These would make the ideal Christmas present for anyone who is a connoisseur of fine chutneys! **ALL OF THE PROCEEDS GO DIRECT TOWARDS THE TAU INTERFAITH FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY FUNDS.**

## PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYERS

Please can you remember in your prayers the following Friends, Members and Benefactors?

- Brother Sean's Mother who is critically ill in a Dublin hospital.
- Sr. Sharon (London) for ongoing financial support to care for abandoned animals.
- For Sr. Sheila's Mammy (Dublin) who is now too frail to manage at home.
- Sister Theresa (Manchester) for renewed strength following a recent illness.
- Sister Julie (South Lakes) for special prayers for finding the right place to live and inner peace.
- Sr. Sheila (Edinburgh) for continued strength and guidance in her life.
- For all our fellow Oblates, Friends and Benefactors.
- For Brother David Grey and his group of lay Franciscans in Manchester for guidance and support.
- For the members of our New League of Friends
- For Mother Olivea and our Custodians who represent the Tau Family.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER '09

**2009.**

### MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP AND RETREAT DAYS FOR OBLATES AND FRIENDS

OBLATES	DATES	FRIENDS	DATES
SATURDAY:	14 <sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER '09	SATURDAY:	21 <sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER '09
SATURDAY:	12 <sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER '09	SATURDAY:	5 <sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER '09

**2010**

OBLATES	DATES	FRIENDS	DATES
SATURDAY	2 <sup>ND</sup> JANUARY '10	SATURDAY	16 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY '10
SATURDAY	6 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY '10	SATURDAY	20 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY '10

## CHRISTMAS SOIREE FOR THE FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE TAU FAMILY

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 19<sup>th</sup> (5-10pm)** Mother Olivea with the Custodians and our League of Friends are planning a Christmas Curry and Carols Evening for our Oblates, Friends and Benefactors of our Community. If you wish to join us, can we ask that you please let us know by December 10<sup>th</sup>. We are asking for a minimum donation of £5.00 to help cover the costs of catering, etc..

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December New Year's Eve- Brothers Sean and Rob are holding a special evening of Franciscan Celebration to Brother Sun and Sister Moon which starts at around 7pm with a Jacob's Feast followed by spiritual guided meditation, chants and dance to prepare for the

coming of 2010, a year of great blessings. Weather permitting, we hope to have a candle ceremony in the Feminine sacred garden to honour The Queenship of Mother Mary 'January 1<sup>st</sup>.' Part of this candlelit ceremony will honour Mother Earth, Quan Yin, Miriam Magdalene and all of the Feminine energies from the Celtic tradition who are currently holding the vortex of light for 2010. If you would like to join us on New Year's Eve, then please contact Brothers Sean or Rob.

### Brother Sean's Personal Reflection for November 2009.

There is something so spiritually beautiful about the season of autumn which makes my heart leap for joy. Just by strolling through the woodlands, one can sense the power of Mother Nature. When we walk on the carpets of fresh fallen leaves, one gets the sensation that Mother Earth has prepared all of this for my personal enjoyment. The season of autumn and winter inspire the heart who is eager to embrace the Natural World-the Franciscan soul, by voluntarily shedding their redundant leaves of excess negativity and baggage. Like the trees that have shed their excess baggage in their preparation for new shoots to come forth in the spring, maybe we should reflect on what Mother Nature is trying to share with our already over burdened mind.

Many would argue that nature, even the animal kingdom have little to teach us about embracing the spiritual path! How wrong they are! The simple question I am guided to put to your heart today is, 'When did you last enter the domain of the Nature Spirits and tree Devas? When did you last look up towards the skies to discern what the ancient masters have been trying to communicate with your heart? As one who embraces Franciscan Spirituality, our hearts are guided to work with nature and experience liberation from the stressors that make us weary! Sometimes, I am asked by well meaning religious people about the place of worship where I go to honour my God? You can well imagine their reactions when I refrain from naming their local Church in preference for the 'Cathedral of Life.' I usually keep them dangling just to get a reaction! When I share with them my love for the 'Cathedral of Life,' they are drawn into the mystery and you can see by their eyes that they too want to go there.....then, when I say more about the cathedral of life, they look at me in complete disbelief and start giggling amongst themselves.

Now that we have put our clocks back one hour, there is less daylight in the evening making more time to sit and relax and possibly make time to be alone with our God in reflective silence. Sometimes we need to retreat into our hearts and ask God what He/She maybe saying to our hearts.....it is laudable to make time for the soul in silence and retreat from the family, the world and one's numerous challenges just to bathe in Divine love. Recently, I was guided to momentarily just be still and allow God speak to my heart of past events since July 2006 when St. Francis spoke to us about preparing a place to invite God's interreligious family into a spiritual community. I suddenly started crying with tears of joy as I recalled my visit to the tomb of St. Francis at Assisi where I was guided to kneel and wait! I was reliving that moment all over again when the tears were flooding my heart to the same word, '*Restore God's Family and invite all faiths and none to come and "Behold-Enfold-Hold and Listen"*' to their loving Father Mother God.' As a spiritual community of Interfaith Franciscan, we are very much in the 'spiritual autumn' of our growth. But, there is hope of new shoots about to burst forth as and when the time is right. Though we are saddened by the rejection from with the main Christian Family towards the Tau Vision for interreligious unity, we take heart from the words of the Master Jesus who said; '*I never said that the journey would be easy, but I do reassure your hearts that today, I will be with you always.*' Though many may still perceive us as being religious or pushing religion, then all we can say is, where is that coming from when it is not part of our remit from St Francis? Could it be that many are somewhat apprehensive about taking the leap of faith and following their heart to do what is right for them?

The vision of the Tau Community of Saint Francis is not to establish a new Church for the elite! The vision is about establishing an alternative way of celebrating our spiritual diversity without the ancient dogma and centuries of clerical abuse which, sadly, has alienated the ordinary person from their Loving Father Mother God. The vision is a new way of living in a spiritual interfaith

community where the teachings of the Essenes and their Tree of Life dating back 8000 years, will help formulate a less bureaucratic but more cohesive and tolerant spiritual family that is accessible for all. It is a vision that will not segregate people by reason of their disability, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, colour or beliefs. It is a way of living a simple yet practical rule of life that honours the Divine within the entire Natural World-the Franciscan soul. It is a vision that will promote compassion and peace. It is a vision that will allow its members to be what God has intended for them. It is a vision that seeks not to destroy the current Church but will hopefully be allowed to work in equal partnership as an alternative spiritual community. It is a vision where respect for the Natural World, the landscape will take precedence and by promoting an eco sustainable project, will meet the needs of all God's children to come together in Love and share their labours and fruitfulness with each other and the whole family of God just like the Essenes back in Egypt and Judea. It is a hands on vision where we the spiritual community will be judged not by our lofty sermons, exquisite clerical dress and the use of an outdated language that is representative of the Church of God as we now know it. If we are to become the 'salt and light of the world,' then we have a duty to honour what our Heavenly Father Mother God is now saying to our hearts.

The vision of the Tau Interfaith Franciscan Community is a community where ordinary men and women become the 'hope of the hopeless,' through the power of God. Instead of doing what the Early Christian Fathers and their followers have done down through the centuries, "We are not to 'Talk God's Walk' but more importantly, to 'Walk God's Talk.'" Our witness to interreligious spirituality must transfigure our usual ways of dealing with hate and suspicion, of brokenness and separation, of fear and bitterness. As members of the Tau Interfaith Franciscan Community, whether we are friends, oblates or monastics, then we have no option. We are servants of the God who reigns and cares. He wants us to be a loving yet tolerant spiritual community where harshness insensitivity, rejection are replaced by a more compassionate and caring community. I believe that the Church we have come to know, is a Church that has now passed its 'sell by date,' because regrettably, many of its children are not seen as gifted individuals but mere statistics. The vision for the Tau Community of St. Francis is a vision that honours the Divine Feminine and Masculine energies! As an alternative Franciscan Interfaith spiritual family of both friends and monastics, we must show that everyone counts as being of immense value to God and where we demonstrate God's love in action and not be inspired to control others or abuse our gifts in the name of a Loving God. In other words, we must distance our hearts from two thousand years of a male dominated, ego driven hierarchical institution which has not healed itself but rather created conflict and division by taking its eye of God and disconnecting the heart. In the words of Ghandi, 'I so love your Christ, but not your Christians. They are not like your Christ.' Or, as Jesus once said, 'You will know my disciples by the love they have for each other.' Within the Tau Interfaith Franciscans Community, we have taken the words of St. Francis, Mother Mary and that of St. Therese of Lisieux to our hearts by nurturing a spiritual way of life that values the integrity of each person as representing God Himself! Could the following resonate with your heart today? If you love me, you will give a cup of water to the one who is thirsty and food to the person who is hungry! Or, if you listen to untruth, then you will reap that untruth from your own hearts! Let history judge the Church for its legacy and maybe society will judge the members of the Tau Community in a loving way for daring to step out from its comfort zone by embracing a heart that is centred on a more compassionate society- a society that is now desperately seeking an alternative spiritual community where the soul can untie in its expression of its deepest yearnings from within the heart of God's divided family, 'That will be one, as You and I are one.'

May I ask this of your heart today? Instead of always taking the back seat, or by handing your power away to others, would you like to become more valued and loved as a member or Friend of the Tau Interfaith Franciscan Community?

- Would you be willing to embrace your heart and hear it sing as a valued member of the Vision of Saint Francis?

- Would you be willing to surrender your life and talents to make our alternative spiritual community become a reality both for you and for others today?
- Or, would you be interested in becoming a member of our Society of Friends and support the members of the Monastic Interfaith Spiritual Community?
- Would you enjoy being part of God's vision for a more cohesive, less fragmented spiritual community whose heart is alive with love for an eco sustainable project that will provide the Abbey; woodland pet cemetery; market gardens; Abbey shop; an animal rescue and healing centre plus a range of alternative dwellings?

Finally, if your heart is crying **YES** to witness as a Friend or as one of our Oblates or Monastics within the Tau Interfaith Franciscan Community of reconciliation, a forgiving community of the forgiven, have you got what it now takes to fulfil such a dream?

**N**amaste

Brother Sean TCOSF

Hon. Brother General of the TCOSF