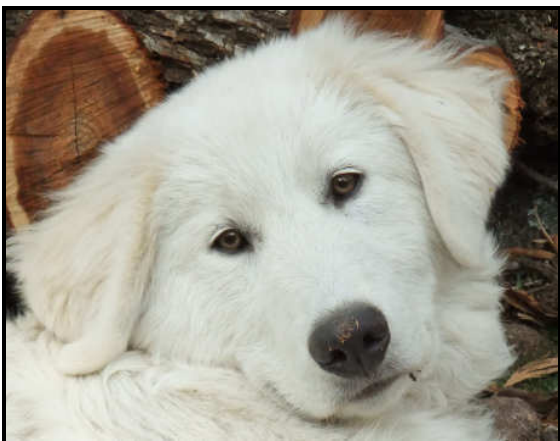


CHRISTMAS 2011

**HI!
MY NAME IS SHEPHERD**

Hi, I am a Maremma, and my name is *Shepherd*, because I am the fourth shepherd here at the hermitage. I am still settling in, so I thought I would share some things about me with you. That is besides the obvious that I am intelligent, good looking, full of personality and energy. These aren't my observations but those of the Brothers.



My ancestors came from Italy where we were used to protect flocks against predation by wolves and thieves.

We are quite unlike herding dogs whose behaviour is derived from their hunting ancestors, that is drive, stalk and chase flocks in order to control and move them.

In contrast we live permanently with 'our' flock and regard them as our social companions, protecting them from anything that they see as a threat.



The Brothers are also shepherds and they have been reflecting on their heritage and the link with Christmas. The importance of the shepherds at the birth of Jesus is that they were people of no consequence. Within their culture they are like those people who clean up our mess at Food Courts, rarely thanked, almost invisible. The religious discounted them because they could not fulfill their religious obligation due to the demands of looking after their flocks. However, God's love is inclusive and extends to all, like shepherds, who live on the margins of society.



SPECIAL GUEST: SPECIAL FRIEND

We invited Jenny Drury from Christchurch New Zealand to be our special guest to celebrate St. Francis Day. Jenny is one of the founding members of the Friends of the Little Brothers of Francis and has experienced the loss of her home, her church and business with the earthquake.

From stress, sirens and security fences, from dust and destruction, from broken sleep and broken dreams to a haven of peace, prayer, beauty, love and friendship. Thanks Brothers for your wonderful hospitality and for sharing this special time with me.

Jenny Drury



Jenny helping establish firebreaks

Prayer, peace, and friendship was important but, so typical of Jenny, she became actively involved in supporting the Brothers putting in firebreaks in preparation for summer and bushfires during her stay.

This visit from Jenny, following visits from Fr. David Moore and Ian Lothian, has continued to strengthen our links with the Friends in New Zealand and with St. Luke's Parish in Christchurch.

COFFIN BAY OYSTERS & EMU PIE

It all began with arriving in Adelaide and the introduction to the distinctive and attractive features of the city of Adelaide through the generous hospitality of Fr. Christopher Myers, the Provincial of the Society of the Sacred Mission. This included a celebratory meal and the introduction to the gourmet delight of Coffin Bay Oysters, for both Brother Wayne and Fr. Christopher share a birthday together and a long friendship.

Then Brother Wayne set off with Fr. Bill Goodes, Chaplain to the Religious Community of St. Cecilia and St. Barnabas, to conduct their annual retreat and renewal of vows at Melrose at the foot of Mt. Remarkable. On the way they stopped at a remote location with only one shop, famous for its pies, where Brother Wayne experienced his first Emu pie.

The Community of Saints Barnabas and Cecilia is both residential and a dispersed religious community founded in the Anglican Diocese of Willochra in rural S.A.



This year they were joined by members of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis and Fr. John Beiers, who made a major contribution to the Bush Brothers.

EXPLORING COUNTRY EAST OF OUR HERMITAGE



Roughly 140 kilometers east of our hermitage is Ballina on the coast. Then 30 kilometers up the coast is Byron Bay the most easterly place in Australia.



To celebrate Brother Wayne's 65th Birthday, 45 years as a Franciscan Brother, and 24 years at the Hermitage, Brother Geoffrey on the far right and Brother Wayne next to him went on a hot air balloon flight over the region around Byron Bay. A truly different and wonderful way to experience country.

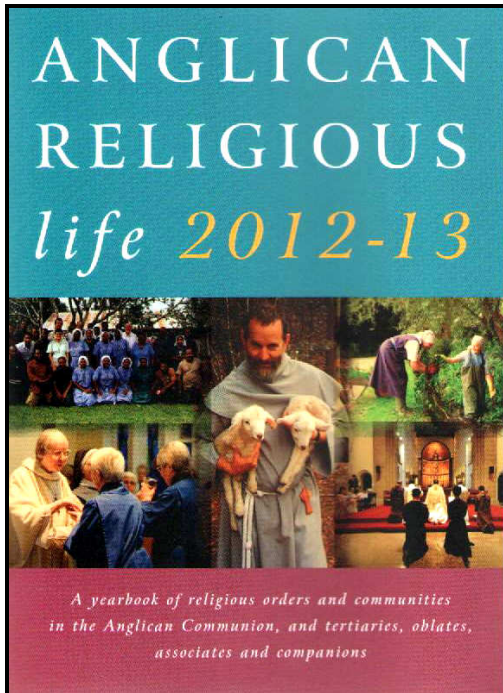
OUR HERMITAGE – FROM OUR CHARISM DOCUMENT

St. Francis's love for the 'Little Portion' or Portiuncula, the first hermitage, is revealed in one of the earliest documents about him. *The holy man loved this place above all others. This place he commanded his brothers to venerate with a special reverence.*

Therefore he often said to his brothers: 'See to it, my sons, that you never abandon this place. If you are driven out from one side, go back in at the other. For this place is truly holy and is the dwelling place of God. Here, when there were but few, the Most High gave us increase; here he enlightened the hearts of his poor ones by the light of his wisdom; here he set our wills afire with the fire of his love.'

In shaping and forming this place over the years it has shaped and formed us also. This forming and shaping of both the place and us has taken place through picking up rocks to terrace little pockets of soil, clearing new fence lines of rocks and gathering them for the construction of our buildings and their thoughtful location.

We have improved the soil's fertility with manure and organic material to benefit our fruit trees, vegetable garden and pasture. The creek is an integral part of our life, supplying water for our livestock, garden and domestic purposes. We have integrated our flocks of goats and sheep into our land management practices, especially bushfire protection. Floods, droughts and predators have brought us into a real and living spiritual relationship with this place, a place we decided to call *Eremophila* - a word that links us back into why we, as Franciscan Brothers, have come here.



It is first and foremost an international directory of monastic life throughout the Anglican world.

This year's focus is on the rise of *new monasticism* and the many movements emerging worldwide.

It has also been enlarged to include all associate groups – oblates, tertiaries, companions, associates and others.

The publication provides retreat and accommodation information, available at religious houses.

Available from:
 Rainbow Book Agencies
www.rainbowbooks.com.au
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GIVING GIFTS

At this time of giving gifts we would like to thank the following.

For those who have supported us with their gifts of friendship, upheld us in prayer, and encouragement.

For those who have given us the gifts of their practical help, hospitality, advice, financial assistance.

For those who have given us the gifts of their time, financial and practical help in the printing and distribution of the Bush Telegraph

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

This year instead of sending Christmas Cards we have replaced them with this special edition of the Bush Telegraph.



Love came down at Christmas.
 Love Divine, all loves excelling.
 Love incarnate, Jesus.
 God is with us, Emmanuel.

Bush Telegraph

(published twice a year)

**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.