

## Reflection Tuesday Week 19 – St Clare 2020

She was born in Assisi in 1193/94 and came under the influence of Saint Francis. She left home at 18 and, under Francis' guidance, founded a community now known as the Poor Clares. (She was later joined by her sister and her widowed mother). They adopted a radical attachment to poverty. In 1215 Clare obtained from the Pope the privilege of owning nothing, so that the nuns of the order were to be sustained by alms and nothing else. Like the Franciscan rule, her rule challenged both the established structures and those who followed it. In 1247 Pope Innocent IV promulgated a new Rule that allowed the ownership of communal property: Clare rewrote it. Clare was a noted contemplative and a caring mother to her nuns. She died in Assisi in 1253.

Despite Jesus response to Peter's question "*What's in it for us!*" **We** are not **in it** for the money or the reward. Clare recognised in radical poverty the truth that we do not own anything; that everything we have is gift. In this case it follows that we need to take extra care of everything and value all that we have as though it does not belong to us: the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the company we keep – family. Every religious community considers itself to be a family in which we look out for each other and in which all things are held in common. Everything we touch, therefore, is precious and, in some respects, sacred - most especially life. The Poor Clares remind us that we live our lives in thanksgiving to God and with a desire to sing God's praises. St Clare would say that this is possible for all who follow Christ in whatever form of life they choose to follow - family life, single life, consecrated life, religious life, priesthood. Then, like the Poor Clares, we, too, will discover *the Joy of the Gospel* that Pope Francis so often speaks about.

As the Psalmist proclaims: *Lord, you will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right-hand happiness for ever!*

### **Always wanting more . . .**

One day the nation's president addressed a huge number of people in the city square:

He said: "*From now on everybody is only going to work on Wednesdays*".

Hearing the news, everyone starts cheering with joy and happiness.

After a few minutes, one guy from the crowd yells out: "**What! Every Wednesday?**"