



Christmas, 2017

Dear Friends,

Christmas is a feast of joy and light. As the Angel said to the trembling shepherds: "I bring you news of great joy!" Soon there was a whole host of angels "singing and rejoicing." Think of the rejoicing in heaven that the time had come for the redemption of sinful man. When this was accomplished there would be thousands upon thousands who could enter Heaven to join the Angels and the Saints in praising God. Think also of the joy of the young Virgin Mother and of her chaste spouse.

After a long journey with Mary in the last stages of pregnancy, tired and disappointed at not finding a place to shelter, Joseph finds a cave on the outskirts of Bethlehem. After cleaning it out he brings Mary who soon after gives birth to her beautiful, perfect little Boy. They gaze on Him as He sleeps peacefully in His manger, made comfortable with fresh hay by St. Joseph. A small fire burns easily in an alcove to warm Him, a bright star above sheds a silvery light over them as they gaze in overwhelming joy on this tiny, new-born Child whom they know to be our God. The Angels have announced "Joy to the World" so let us too lift up our hearts in joy and gratitude for this wonderful blessing.

21st November was a day of special joy for our community, for our Congregation and indeed, for our Church. On that day we celebrated the Monastic Profession (Final Vows) of our Sr. M. Veronica, now a radiant Mother M. Veronica. In the same ceremony our Rev. Mother M. Cyril celebrated her Diamond Jubilee – 60 years – of religious Profession. Our chapel has never looked more lovely. We received gifts of beautiful floral arrangements from friends. There were large purely white arrangements of roses, lilies, stocks, gerberas and white Singapore orchids. Others were from a florist friend. They had white lilies literally scattered with deepest blue Singapore orchids. The perfume was heavenly. Other friends brought gifts of food sufficient to satisfy the very numerous congregation who went well nourished in soul and body.

There were seven priests for the Mass with our Chaplain, Rev. Fr. John Rizzo as main celebrant. Three of our Oblates were acolytes which added to the solemnity. During the Litany of the Saints the whole congregation sang the responses and when we sang the Our Father we “raised the roof” as the priests in full voice led Sisters and laity, all singing from the depths of our hearts. We surely penetrated the clouds to give extra joy to our Heavenly Father.

Our new Mother pronounced her Vows clearly and with conviction. When we sang the ancient Monastic Suscipe there was many a tear flowing unashamedly. Our Rev. Mother M. Cyril renewed her Vows and it was lovely to hear her sing the Suscipe as she had done so many years ago.

We thank all those who joined us on that momentous day and all those who contributed in so many ways. May God bless each one of you.

To add to our joy, Rev. Mother M. Xavier came out from London. She stayed for just one week to see to the arrangements and to receive the Vows. Many of you will remember Mother who was our Superior General for many years. Now, indefatigable as ever, she is our Assistant Mother General. We are so grateful for her presence on this special occasion.



Coming down to earth, we still have 2 hens, 3 alpacas and one pig. Wilbur and his wife have gone to a friendly farm to be replaced by a more docile ‘Daisy’, who is growing fast. On the other hand, the alpacas are greatly reduced in size “only skin and bone” according to one Sister, since they have been shorn of their wool. If anyone does spinning you are welcome to their wool! Just ring and ask for us to arrange collection. The animals have regular visits from the two children of our friends Eamon and Magdalene. The children just love the animals and now they have two chickens of their own.

Some jottings from our other monasteries:



Tyburn, London: Recently on a visit to the dentist Mother Simon saw this notice on the wall: "You don't have to clean all your teeth, just the ones you want to keep". When we were at Manly Mother Simon was our Prioress – you can see how she is today, just go to the Home Page of Tyburn Convent (tyburnconvent.org.uk). Click on "News and Media" and choose TYBURN CONVENT Fundraising from the drop-down menu.

St. Benedict's Priory, Cobh, Ireland: On 16th October Ireland was buffeted by hurricane Ophelia. Not knowing what a hurricane is, the Nigerian Sisters were looking forward to it – until it struck with vengeance. In the early morning all was quiet and still, but very cold. By 9.30 it was beginning to blow. By 10.30 it was "too much". It was destroying trees, houses and glass was

flying in all directions. Their greenhouse was totally destroyed. They needed to stay away from all windows and indeed, one of their windows was actually sucked outside. They lost power which meant no light and no heating. Water must have seeped in through the roof because later some of the walls had sprouted mushrooms. The verdict was: "it was too much". To see the walls, go to the previous site.

From Largs, Scotland comes the news that on 3rd September the whole country was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by all the bishops. Although it was raining, many people attended the ceremony which was preceded by 3 days of prayer, which the Sisters also joined in. Two weeks later the Sisters received a surprise visit from the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady. She was welcomed by a candle light procession and for 8 days there were holy hours, rosaries, readings and songs held in 2 sessions, 10.00 am and 2.00 pm. A large number of people came to join in these devotions.

From Sechura, Peru: The Sisters send their sincere thanks to our generous friends for their help in the repairs of their monastery and guest house. They are now rejoicing with two new novices and we pray for their perseverance.

In Ngakuru, New Zealand: Their two Nigerian novices made their first profession of Vows and are now called Juniors. One of these Juniors, Sr. M. Anastasia has now transferred to Bombay (N.Z.) where the



Sisters are receiving ever more visitors and retreatants. Soon they will need to extend the monastery yet again!

At St. Loup, France: The Sisters were singing Vespers one day when they had surprise visitors. Five little children clambered noisily into the laity chapel, all wide-eyed with wonder. They settled down and were perfectly quiet, listening to the Sisters singing. It turned out that the visitors were cousins who had no religious knowledge at all, they just came to hear the singing. The Sisters gave them some catechesis and the children said they would come again and next time “we will pray with you”. We pray that they will receive the gift of Faith.

Many people have been inquiring about Mother Foundress’ house – is it opened yet? Sadly it cannot be opened until the funds have been raised amounting to 70,000 Euros. The largest expense is 10,000 Euros for a septic tank to comply with French laws. Then there are the renovations and fittings. We are putting our faith in Divine Providence to supply what is needed.



St. Loup in the snow

We apologise that this Newsletter is later than usual due to unforeseen circumstances. We pray that when it arrives, it will find you joyfully preparing to celebrate Christmas with your loved ones. May the Lord bless you as you contemplate the wonder of the great and powerful God who came to us as a tiny Baby totally depending on His Mother for His every need.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on the night of Christmas Eve will be offered especially for you, our dear friends and for all your intentions, and we pray for you each day before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in our chapel. With our loving Christmas greetings and wishes,

from Rev. Mother Prioress and the Community

