

# TYBURN NEWSLETTER

TYBURN MONASTERY COR. JESU FONS VITAE, 74 DODS RD. NGAKURU RDI, ROTORUA 3077

CHRISTMAS 2017

Dear Friends of Tyburn Monastery



It is good to welcome Christmas once again with its message of peace and joy to all. Perhaps we cannot all be happy; there are many who are suffering or mourning at this time. Yet all who believe in Christ can be grateful that He came to our world to bring us the hope of salvation and to give meaning to our sufferings. We welcome Him who was born into great poverty. Certainly one of the forgotten messages of Christmas is that of esteem for 'Lady Poverty' as St Francis termed it. We recently read a pithy phrase from Abbot de Rance: "The rich person is not one who has everything, but the one who wants nothing." Our most precious gift to others is that of our love which does not need expensive gifts to be seen, but which costs us the most to practice towards all, especially those more unlovable people in our lives.

Our year seems to have been a celebratory one with Mother Rachel's Silver Jubilee in February and the Temporary Profession of our two Novices Sr Cecilia and Sr Anastasia on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. We thank those who came to support our Sisters in this new step into the Monastic Life that they were taking. It was a beautiful occasion, presided over by our good Bishop Stephen Lowe, and the Sisters were very happy, smiling even as they read their vows. Their families in Nigeria were sent the photos and short videos and reported that they wept for joy as they watched this happy event. May God bless them and grant peace to their country of Nigeria. A week after the profession Sr Anastasia put into practice her vow of obedience by taking up residence at our Monastery in Bombay, Auckland where she is using her culinary skills to assist the community and guests there.



Before that we participated in the Golden Jubilee of Matrimony of our good friends Jo and Irene Rogers. These friends have assisted us in many ways ever since the beginning of the foundation. Their children arranged all the details of the Holy Mass that was celebrated for this occasion and the grandchildren too were present to congratulate them on achieving 50 years of married life. What a wonderful example! We pray that all young couples may receive the grace to imitate their fidelity and perseverance in marriage.



From afar we have also rejoiced in the celebration of R.M. Matthias' golden jubilee, another example of faithfulness to God in her religious vocation. R.M. Matthias has held many positions of responsibility in the Congregation and has served the Lord in our monasteries of various different countries so we thank the Lord for all she has done for our Congregation. And on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November our R.M. Cyril in Australia celebrated her Diamond Jubilee of 60 years of religious profession. R.M. Cyril was the novice mistress of most of us from Australia and was a wonderful teacher and example to us all. May God reward her abundantly. On the same day Sr Veronica made her monastic profession and is now Mother Veronica so there was much rejoicing at Tyburn Priory!

Throughout the year there have been several Temporary Profession ceremonies for which we thank God, the most recent being of Sr Jude at the Motherhouse. That ceremony was recorded and can be seen at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntFNE\\_r\\_ro0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntFNE_r_ro0) along with a number of good talks on the life of our Mother Foundress by RM Xavier. Tyburn Convent's chaplain Rev. Fr Patrick Cope was supposed to celebrate Sr Jude's profession but was unexpectedly diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, he passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October at Tyburn and is much mourned by the Community, his relatives and many friends. May he rest in peace.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July Sr Corinna entered our community as a postulant. She came from Malaysia to enter but unlike our Nigerian Sisters she does not mind the cold and was delighted (as we all were!) when snow fell here on July 13<sup>th</sup>. A gift from the Lord to the new Postulant.



Two novice oblates, Karen Moeau (Sr Maria Teresa) and Marina Moss (Sr Mary of Egypt) made their oblation as oblates this year, and two more, Lesley and Owen Pauling (Sr Bernadette and Br Ignatius) hope to do so in December of this year. We will also welcome Goretti and Akata as novice oblates at that time. It is good to have a growing oblate family who try to live out the spirit of St Benedict in the world. According to author Rod Dreher, the future of Christianity lies in following St Benedict's example. The Saint withdrew from the corruption of society following Rome's fall and in time founded a number of religious communities. These Christian strongholds eventually "saved not just Christianity but Western Civilization." In his book "The Benedict Option" Dreher suggests that we are now living in a time when a "new, post-Christian barbarism reigns" and religious liberty is threatened on all sides. He believes that Christians need to "embrace exile from the main stream culture and construct a resilient counterculture". Whatever we may think of his opinion we certainly need to pray that we can remain strong in faith and not be swept away by the anti-religious culture in which we live.



We had two Baptism ceremonies this year. One in September when Lachlan McNaull (left in photo) and Beau Weston (right) received the grace of this sacrament. The second was in November, of Cara Louise de los Santos, who also became a member of the household of God and a citizen of Heaven. We thank God for these new, small members

of the Church. None of them wept when they had water poured over them but all had the same, thwarted, desire to hold the burning baptismal candle! We had recently heard a talk on Baptism when a Saint was quoted as saying that if we could see the soul of a newly baptized person, we would be tempted to fall on our knees and worship that soul, so great is it's splendour in union with Christ.

Quite a lot of work has been done on our property this year to remove expanding areas of blackberry. Our helpers come now and again to assist in this work and we also had the 'Acremakers' in the do the very big jobs. So two hillsides have been recovered and one is already planted up with natives. The lower area around the ponds has also reappeared and the islands can now be accessed. It is a great relief to have these areas tidied up and accessible.



To assist in an easy descent to the bush walk, Owen Pauling has finished his steps down the steepest part, complete with railings for safety and seats for rest. A white stone cross was designed and kindly donated by Barry Knightly (see right lower corner of photo) Since the garden around the steps was planted by our oblate Sr Bernadette it was thought appropriate to name the area 'Nevers Way' (Nevers in France is the place where St Bernadette of Lourdes lived in her convent and where her incorrupt body now rests.) There is a natural sort of grotto at one side where a kneeling statue of St

Bernadette would look very appropriate. If anyone knows of a large statue of this saint that is not being used, we would be happy to give it a good home.

We are attempting to slightly redesign our orchard following the permaculture principles of planting around the trees other beneficial herbs, flowers, shrubs and trees that help the fruit trees to be productive without the need for artificial fertilizers or pesticides. It will take some time to settle but will certainly be of benefit. Already the formerly small and dry citrus are showing signs of improving with the mineral rich comfrey planted nearby.



Our Barred Plymouth Rock heritage chickens are giving us their eggs every day, even in winter, so they are productive members of the community. They also weed and fertilize some of our gardens during the winter months and provide the nuns with beneficial exercise when they escape as they love to do from time to time. They are free range chickens but are meant to be so only within a specified area!

This year we were again participants in the three day Rotorua Garden Festival and although it is quite a lot of work preparing for this event, we always enjoy meeting the many people who come to view the gardens. Some mentioned that they never knew the place existed. Our friends helped us to serve Devonshire teas to the visitors and the small craft and plant stalls did well also. We extend our gratitude to

our oblates and friends who helped prepare for and assist us in this event, including our neighbours Gayleen and Geoff who continue to help maintain the gardens. Not to forget Denis and his P.D workers who regularly mow lawns and pull weeds! Immediately after that we enjoyed a flying visit from R.M.Xavier on her way to Australia for the jubilee of R.M.Cyril. M.Angela accompanied her and it was an added joy to see her also.



We wish all of you our dear friends every grace and blessing of Christmas. As a last note regarding Christmas – I’m sure you know the Carol called The Twelve Days of Christmas (On the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me...etc) We were recently told that this carol dates from the time in England when Catholics were not allowed to practice their faith openly. During that time someone wrote this carol as a Catechism song for young Catholics. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

It is a bit long to write but according to Ann Ball in her book, Handbook Of Catholic Sacramentals: The 2 turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments. The 3 French hens stood for faith, hope, and love. The 4 calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.



The 5 golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior. The 6 geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation. 7 swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit - Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy. The 8 maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes. 9 ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit - Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity](3 similar ones are linked

together to make 9 – there are actually 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit). The 10 lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments. The 11 pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles. The 12 drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

May we again run forth to meet Christ during Advent with ‘righteous deeds’ and thus give a glad welcome to our Divine Saviour. Our prayers will be with you, with deep gratitude for your support, especially on Christmas Day. May God bless you, your families and loved ones also throughout the New Year.

The Tyburn Nuns

