



Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Montmartre OSB

St. Benedict's Priory, The Mount, Cobh, Co Cork

Tel./Fax:(021) 4811 354

+
PAX

cobhtyburnconvent@gmail.com

Sacred Heart Newsletter 2020

Dear Friends,

Who am I?

Where do I come from?

Where am I going?



These words of our Beloved Foundress the Servant of God Mother Marie Adele Garnier come from her reflections on the mystery of Life, Death and Resurrection in her short but powerfully beautiful "Caterpillar

Document". Taking as her imagery the life cycle of a caterpillar and butterfly, which she contemplates and describes in the most exquisite prose, she draws comparisons with our own journey, both physical and spiritual. Here are some excerpts:

"Today it is a caterpillar that attracts my attention. It is crossing the path. I see it and follow it in my thoughts; perhaps it will teach me something about life or death; and the outcome of my observations will be an act of love!?"

She addresses the above three questions to the caterpillar, and discovers in the answers the need for each of us to look beyond our present existence to a more sublime future. Contemplating in the chrysalis the image of death, she proclaims our Christian hope:

"The Cross which casts its' shadow over the tombstone speaks to our faith of the hope of salvation for the soul, but it says more than that. Standard of our Risen Lord coming forth from the Sepulchre, it is also a sweet sign of the deliverance of the body."

Mortality is something each of us comes to face more or less directly at various times in our lives, especially when we lose a loved one, but in the past months we have turned to face this reality together, as a race. The questions are important ones, and as our lives are turned upside down and nothing seems certain anymore, they become the only ones that really matter. In our Monastic Life we have discovered that in fact it is this mystery of our journey with Jesus through life and death, and the different ways we experience dying and rising, that brings us peace.

Enclosed with this newsletter is our gift to you this year: two prayers to help us grow spiritually through this difficult time. Here in Ireland the elderly and vulnerable were asked to "cocoon" and the coincidence was not lost on one of our cocooning Oblates who, knowing the "Caterpillar Document", wrote that she hoped she would emerge ready to fly to spiritual heights!

In our Congregation this year, we have been deeply touched by the passing to the Lord of two dear Sisters, Mother M Cyril (Schaeffer) and Mother M Angela (Stevens). They went to their

eternal reward within two days of each other, with Mother Angela saying that Mother M Cyril



must go first, since she was senior to her in Religious Profession!

Mother M Cyril had been Prioress on the foundation in Peru where she formed our first Latin American sisters, before being assigned to Australia as Prioress and Novice Mistress where she died on 15th March, having celebrated her Diamond Jubilee a few years earlier. She is deeply missed, having been Novice Mistress to very many

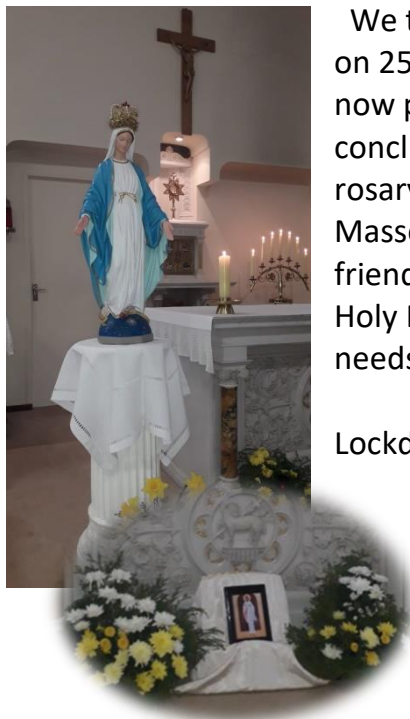
Sisters of our Congregation, including our present Mother General! Here is what she wrote on receiving news of her death: *"She was so full of love and charity and gentleness and patience! Our dear saintly Mother. I pray she gives us a double portion of her spirit. My mother, my mother! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!!!"* Mother Angela was known to many of you, since she was Prioress of St Benedict's Priory at the time we transferred to Ireland in 1993. St. Benedict's Priory was a very big part of her life since she entered at Royston, England which was our first location. Her head for business and practical things which she inherited from her Father, meant that she was quickly, even as a novice, placed in charge of such concerns in the monastery, and would have had a lot of involvement in the move to Wadhurst, Sussex, in 1964. She also fulfilled assignments as cellarer at the Motherhouse and as Prioress in Australia. As Prioress of St. Benedict's Priory, as has been said, she had the oversight, together with the Superior General, of the move to Cobh, the adaptation of the former Mercy Convent to our cloistered way of life with enclosure and enlarged chapel for the laity, and the development of a monastic heritage exhibition and last but not least, the Bible Garden. This latter was her masterpiece and joy, and only a few weeks before her last illness we had been in contact with her, asking advice and keeping her up to date with the work we are doing. Shortly following the completion of her term as Prioress here, having truly won the hearts of many Irish people near and far, she accompanied our Mother General on a world tour of our houses in Latin America and Oceania, as the DVD Gloria Deo was filmed. We do remember her mentioning that a bit of her heart was still in Cobh. Finally she took up the position once again of Prioress in our new foundation in



Ngakuru, New Zealand, which she loved and then in Bombay, New Zealand. Once again she displayed her great giftedness with the people...and the gardens! Her final illness was very sudden and lasted about a month, and here is the amazing thing: she died on St Patrick's Day! Not only that, but it was in the early hours of 17th March in New Zealand, a good twelve hours ahead of us, which gave us time to arrange that our own St Patrick's Day Mass would be celebrated for the repose of her Soul in the presence of a few of her friends. When the present crisis has passed and we are permitted to gather once more, we will do so in her memory. **Please let us know if you would like to be invited, and if possible give us your email address.**

We know that there are those among you who have also lost loved ones, whether from covid-19 or other illnesses. We offer you our heartfelt condolences and prayers and encourage you to write to us with the names of your sick or deceased friends and family. At the beginning of the pandemic we, along with all our houses, opened a register of those who had been infected and placed it at the foot of our Altar in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord. Since the Sacred Heart

has provided us with a resident chaplain we have had the immense privilege of attending his private Masses, while being painfully aware of the great deprivation felt by most of the faithful at not being able to participate in Holy Mass in person or receive the sacraments. We are praying constantly for the alleviation of this situation, especially through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



We took part in the Consecration of Ireland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 25th March in Union with Archbishop Eamon Martin our Primate, and are now participating in the 54 day rosary Novena which he has called for, concluding on 19th June, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. We pray the rosary after None at 3pm each day. We have also celebrated the ritual Masses “in time of Pandemic” and “in time of Famine”, the latter with our friends and families in Africa particularly in mind.

Holy Mass on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart will be offered for all the needs and intentions of you our friends and benefactors.

Lockdown for us has perhaps not been such a drastic change as for most people, and our daily routine of “ora et labora” (prayer and work) continues. Of course, in addition to our Daily Mass we continue our singing of the Divine Office seven times a day, our perpetual Adoration throughout the day and some nights, and other private devotions. In this time of crisis we find the psalms are a very powerful means of addressing God, who became one of us and understands all our needs, aspirations and

emotions. Sometimes they appeal to Him for justice, other times they affirm His kingship over creation, they plead for mercy, forgiveness and healing, they intercede for the poor and the broken hearted, they express fear of danger and hope of salvation. At times they express love and longing for Him in a very personal way. We sing all the 150 psalms in the psalter each week on behalf of sinful and suffering humanity.

The closure of our tearoom and retreat house and absence of groups and visitors to our monastery has meant that we have spent more time focussing on our land, growing more fruit and vegetables, and flowers for the sanctuary. We continue to receive and answer letters, emails and phone calls asking for prayers, and realise that these means of communication are very important just now! Our Bible Garden project is getting back off the ground again as

the lockdown eases and we thank our workers and volunteers for their generosity.

If you have been receiving our newsletters over the years, you have probably realised that we never leave it too long before finding another reason to celebrate, and the 80th Birthday of our Mother M. Matthias was our most recent opportunity! She was born on



13th May, date of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima. We blew up balloons, sang happy birthday, and presented her with a chocolate cake, with an “80” candle surrounded by 10 others which she blew out in two goes... At recreation time we enjoyed listening to her stories from years gone by.

5 days later we also remembered the 100th anniversary of the birth of Pope St John Paul II, and we are blessed to have a first class relic in the monastery at the moment, which was put on display in the sanctuary. His intercession is very powerful, and we continue to invoke it particularly at the beginning of each month when we have all night Adoration to pray for unborn children in danger from abortion. We are now asking him to intercede for the world situation, remembering the great love and zeal he had for the well-being of societies and his ardent devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

The next celebration we are looking forward to will be the Oblate profession of Sr Therese (Kathy O’Leary) which had to be postponed due to the lockdown. Our Oblates affiliate themselves in a special way to our community and unite their prayers to ours, taking on some simple prayer commitments such as morning and night prayer and time in the presence of the Holy Eucharist as far as they are able according to the demands of their state of life.

Another event that had been planned before the pandemic arrived was a Monastic Retreat Day open to all, with talks on Monastic history, Saints and our way of life. A Monastic Experience was also scheduled for those interested in discerning a vocation to our life. If you would like to know when we are able to hold these events (the Monastic experience is likely to be possible sooner than the larger retreat day), **please could let us know, if possible with an email address, and we will contact you.**

We thank our dear friends and Oblates who held a stall for us again this year at the Divine Mercy Conference in February, helping us to let people know of our presence here in Ireland. We also thank our friend Peter for designing a very professional website for our community, with links to our Congregation website. **www.benedictineadorerscobh.ie**



As with so many households, our regular sources of income have greatly reduced and we are not really able to engage in fundraising or work on our heating and lift projects. However we are still receiving food gifts each week and donations from kind and generous souls. We are very understanding of the fact that these are hard times and do not wish to place an extra burden on those who are in difficulties, rather we want you to know that you are included specifically in our prayers each day at Vespers when we remember those who are unemployed and the poor. However, we would be very grateful if those who do have means could help us keep going. Thank you. If you would like some more of the prayer cards, or the caterpillar document mentioned above, please let us know.

May God Bless you and the Sacred Heart keep you and your families safe in mind, body and spirit.

If you would like to donate to St Benedict’s Priory please send a cheque made out to St Benedict’s Priory to the above address or go to www.tyburnconvent.org.uk/stbenedictsprioryrenovations and follow the link or make a bank transfer to: Account Number 12884-131, Sort Code: 93-40-62 IBAN: IE61 AIBK 9340 6212 8841 31 BIC: AIBKIE2D