

TYBURN NEWSLETTER

TYBURN MONASTERY COR JESU FONS VITAE, 74 DODS RD. NGAKURU RD1, ROTORUA 3077

CHRISTMAS 2022

www.tyburnmonastery.co.nz.



“How marvellous the mystery revealed to us today! Something new has come to pass: God has become a man; remaining what He was, He assumed what He was not, without any mingling or division of His natures, alleluia.”
(Benedictus Antiphon – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.)

As we begin the season of Advent, the liturgy (which, as a Benedictine Congregation, is our life) not only focuses in a special way on the theme of the Incarnation but is totally immersed in it. During this Holy and Joyful Season, we accompany Mary, the Virgin Mother in joyful expectation of the approaching birth of her Son. We see her rapt in wonder at the utter mystery unfolding itself in her very being. He who is outside of time, is to be born in time. He whom the whole world cannot contain. When we think about what God has done for us by becoming man, not only one of us, but one with us sharing in our human weakness in all things but sin, we cannot but be in awe about this great mystery of God’s love. “He who is Love itself” (1 Jn. 4:16)

Angels are very noticeable at Christmas time, when they seem to be present more than any other time in Scripture. They

foretell the birth of John the Baptist and then ask Mary for her YES to God: whether she would accept the mission of being the Mother of Christ, who was God. One Catholic thinker near to our times has said “I believe in angels, in their real existence. Sometimes I have thought to have sensed – above and most of all at my side - a being barely perceptible and secret, who removes obstacles, inspires me, protects me, and guides me. Who at times with his finger to my lips, brings me a message with which I have to agree. I find that the scene of the Annunciation with which Gabriel communicates with the Virgin only to ask her to say Yes is repeated often in human lives.” This brings the message of Advent closer to us, as we too can question if we are saying Yes to God’s will in our lives. Both happy and painful times will bring us closer to God and to Heaven if we accept all as His loving will for us. Our guardian angels help us in this, as in many other ways.

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It is good to hear that the prayer to St Michael the Archangel is making a come-back and many now recite it. St Pope John Paul II said in 1994 “I ask everyone not to forget (the Prayer to St Michael) and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against the forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world. If every Catholic in the world did so, it would be part of a new crusade to defend Catholic values.” Pope St Leo XIII began this practice of reciting the prayer to St Michael at the conclusion of every Mass after seeing a vision as he was celebrating the Eucharist one day. “In his vision the Catholic

Church was being attacked on all sides by the powers of evil. The battle seemed to be lost, until, at the last moment, St Michael appeared and turned the tide, eventually casting Satan back into hell.” We see the Church suffering much from internal and external divisions at this time and hope to see the victory of St Michael too.

Community News.

Although we have had a lot of guests throughout this past year coming to make their retreat and people visiting the monastery, we had no retreatants in August as we were closed for renovations to redo the breakfast room for easier access, to add another small parlour for spiritual direction and to relocate the shop in the front foyer. This will make the shop easier to find for visitors and keep the guesthouse quiet for retreatants. We were very grateful for the grants that enabled the work to be done! It was nearly finished in the scheduled time, and we were able to re – open the retreat centre on Monday 5th September. On 6th September our first group of retreatants came from the Legion of Mary, Gisborne and ever since the retreat centre has had a continuous stream of guests coming and going, both for day and overnight retreats.



On 13th August we had the unveiling ceremony on Ted Keefe’s grave, RIP who died on 22nd July 2021. Rev. Fr. Stuart Young presided and Ted’s daughter and granddaughter, denied access to NZ at the time of his death due to the covid restrictions, were at last able to come for this ceremony. It was a rare, beautiful day without any rain and the ceremony particularly blessed and peaceful. After the ceremony morning tea was served to the guests and everyone enjoyed being together to share stories and memories of Ted whom they had known and loved so much in this life. May he rest in peace!

This month of November is when we remember to pray for our dear ones who have passed away. They may be waiting in purgatory for our prayers. Purgatory exists thanks to the mercy of God, as those souls are assured of going to Heaven eventually, but it is a place of suffering. Our prayers and good works can help them get to Heaven more quickly. Saints and mystics seem often to be visited by these souls who seek their prayers. The following moving appeal is recorded by a German parish priest Hermann Wagner as having been heard by a certain holy widow in his parish: “You in the world have no inkling of what we have to suffer! Being abandoned and forgotten by those who have been nearest to us in the world: that is the most bitter. Sometimes they stand at the tombs of our decayed bodies and don’t pray for us at all. They act as if we don’t exist anymore. God’s justice commands us to be silent. But we stand at the door of their houses, of our former dwellings, and wait. We stand there and wait. Days, years. We wait for them to give us a small sign of their love by prayer and sacrifices. But we stay there in vain. We cry in vain for love. For help! Tell them through the priest: Love should not die at death. We are still alive and we are hungry for love! For your love!” (Hungry Souls p121) Needless to say, that holy widow did all she could for them and was rewarded by their thanks. The Holy Mass is of course the most powerful help we can give them.



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Our oblates and friends of the community continue to come for all night adoration for the First Friday of the month to make reparation to the Sacred Heart for all the outrages and sacrileges to which He is subjected by man, especially in this day and age, and it is wonderful to see that more people are interested in coming to spend the night in adoration before the Lord in the Sacrament of His Love.



St Philip Neri lived in Rome in the 16th century 1515-1595 and was a Saint who had much love for the Eucharist. Due to his sense of humour, he is sometimes called the patron saint of joy and laughter and said that **“Cheerfulness strengthens the heart**



and helps us to persevere. A servant of God ought always to be in good spirits. Charity and cheerfulness, or charity and humility, should be our motto.” After his death his heart was found to have expanded so greatly with the love of God that 2 of his ribs had been broken and curved outwards. ‘At Mass one day, after distributing Holy Communion, St Philip Neri saw a man leave the church just moments after he had received the Eucharist. The man seemed to lack awareness of the Real Presence of Jesus in the consecrated host he had just received.

The good priest felt he had to do something to help the man understand how disrespectful his action was, so he quickly asked two altar boys to take their lighted candles and follow the man through the streets of Rome. Soon, the man realized the altar boys were following him. Puzzled, he returned to the church to ask Fr Neri about it. Saint Philip told the man, **“We must pay proper respect to Our Lord, whom you are carrying away with you. Since you neglected to adore Him, I sent two acolytes to take your place.”** The man was deeply touched by these words, and resolved to be more aware of Jesus’ presence in his heart after each Holy Communion. Our Lord Jesus is truly and substantially present in the Eucharist, and the minutes (traditionally 15 minutes) following Communion are ‘golden moments’ when we can have a heartfelt conversation with Him. (Shalom Tidings Sep/Oct 2022)

Towards the end of the year, with the assistance of Waikato Council, 900 natives were planted on the bare face of the hill adjacent to the chaplains flat, as well as many redwoods on the neighbouring land. Let us hope most survive the summer and go on to grow tall.

Like most people the increasing costs of living are providing a challenge. We continue our efforts to be self-supporting and now have milking goats. They arrived as 4 day old kids and joined the pet lamb in jumping and running. Not having had goats before we were impressed at their jumping skills but thought it a bit much when they began to leap on the unwary back of anyone who bent over in their presence! The sheep did very well this year, all producing twins or triplets. And the 5 alpacas and various cows are all growing fat and happy. The hens are worse than the goats at escaping though they have plenty of room in their own enclosure.



However, they provide us with eggs so they are a mixed blessing.



We thank the various friends who have helped in working bees this year, mostly in chopping and carting wood for the fires. The guests are always grateful for the fire! Our heating system for the guesthouse and monastery runs on diesel which is becoming very expensive so we are looking to change to a very efficient wood burning boiler. The raffle and donations this year will go towards the cost of at least one boiler.

Congregation News.

We have had 4 silver jubilee celebrations in our Congregation this year. On 20th August, our monastery in France saw the silver jubilee celebration of Rev. Mother Seraphim, whom many of you will remember from her years lived here at Ngakuru and Bombay. The bishop of the diocese Most Rev Joseph de METZ-NOBLAT was the main celebrant with their chaplain and the Prior of Flavigny concelebrating. The community had been resigned to not many attending because of all the endless restrictions, yet the chapel was crowded and our Very Rev. Mother General and some other sisters from Tyburn Convent, London were able to be present, as well as her brother from Australia which was a joyful surprise for her. The good Bishop gave a “very lively and interesting homily as always” wrote one of the community, and when watching it online we wished we could understand what made everyone laugh!



R.M.Seraphim can't believe it has been 25 years since her First Profession, and still remembers that day in detail. **“What a beautiful vocation we have!!!”** she says. In our congregation occasions like this always make the family spirit come more to life and the sisters work hard together to arrange everything so that the ceremony and the reception go smoothly. “M.Brigid and M.Stella working wonders with the catering and M.Narcissa running backwards and forwards in the guesthouse to give the guests a comfortable stay, while M.Mariana made lovely flower displays in the chapel and elsewhere” writes R.M.Josephine. This family spirit is due to the charism and wisdom of our saintly Mother Foundress, the Servant of God, Mother Marie Adele Garnier.

In Peru, our Mother Mary Esperanza made her monastic profession during the month of August, with many of her family present together with friends of the community. Covid restrictions were still in force at the time but all went well despite them.

On the 8th of October Mother Maria Gratia made her monastic

Profession at Cobh, Ireland which was celebrated by Most Rev William Crean D.D Thanks be to God for these new Mothers who have joyfully given their lives to God forever!

Wishing you all a *Very blessed and holy Christmas* and hoping that the New Year will bring you and your loved ones closer to Jesus, our sure hope and refuge, and our most loving Friend. The Holy Mass will be offered for the intentions of all of you, our friends and benefactors.

The Tyburn Nuns, Ngakuru

