



TYBURN TALK

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CHRISTMAS 2014

Dear Friends of Tyburn,

As the leaves are falling and the evenings are drawing in, we think of the passage of time and the changes all around us. We wonder where everything is leading, and look for guidance, for meaning in a fragmented world. But then, we have the consoling and triumphant message of Advent, the coming of the Lord: “God holds your right hand and says, ‘Fear not, I will help you’”. “‘I will help you’, says the Lord, ‘I your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel’”. And we respond to his invitation: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God”. May this Advent be a time of light and joy as we prepare for his coming.

The highlight of this second half of the year for our Congregation has been the General Chapter, held every four years here at the Mother House. It was a most enriching experience and, to quote one of the Sisters, “It was really great meeting all the Sisters from the other houses again. No other experience than the General Chapter can portray our wonderful congregation unity and family spirit, bequeathed to us by our dear Mother Foundress so well”. And, quoting our Mother Foundress, “enough to say for the moment that we are gathered together with the same, single purpose, wishing to form only one heart and one soul in praying and sacrificing ourselves ...for the Sovereign Pontiff, the Church, the clergy”. (Document 1897. The Little Rule).

Then on 9 August took place the election of the new Mother General, a ‘rather astonished’ Mother Gregory from Australia. Cardinal Pell, who had come from Rome

for the event, presided, But we haven’t entirely lost Mother Xavier, who remains on the General Council, giving of her wisdom, and ensuring a smooth transition. We are so grateful to her for all her years of faithful and courageous leadership. Needless to say, we had great celebrations of

gratitude and welcome. The Sisters surpassed themselves in dancing, singing and reciting items from their own cultures. Now we ask your prayers for this new phase in the life of the Congregation.

The General Chapter was preceded by the sorrowful event of the very sudden death of our beloved Mother M Rita in Rome on 13 July. She had only been professed five years, but had endeared herself to everyone by her simplicity and thoughtfulness, and our guests and visitors



had reason to be grateful for her kindness as guest mistress, and were warm in her praise. Her adaptability and self-sacrifice were shown by the fact that, in her short religious life, she had been part of our communities in England, Scotland, Ireland, Rome and New Zealand. After her death she was brought back to England, and the arriving Chapter members were in time to share in her Requiem Mass on 30 July. May she rest in peace.

Two more ladies were added to our religious family as Novice Oblates on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14 September; Chinelo, one of our Vigilants, who took the name Sr Mary Gertrude of the Sacred Heart, and Virginia, who took the name Sr Marie-Therese. Please pray for them that this commitment may be for them a new point of growth in holiness.



A rather unique event took place on the 2 October with the Restoration of the Tyburn Stone Plaque at Marble Arch. This marks the site of the gallows, or 'Tyburn Tree', where many Catholics, the majority of them priests, were executed for the Catholic faith at the Reformation. This event was part of the initiative of the Edgware Road Partnership to improve and upgrade the appearance of Edgware Road – an historic Roman road leading from the city to the north west of

England, and for which they have combined with the Westminster City Council and other public bodies. Three oak trees had been planted around the plaque to resemble the triple tree, and on 2 October there was a short service at the spot when the plaque was blessed by R Fr Chris Pedley SJ of Farm Street Church. This was followed by speeches in the Martyrs' Crypt, and a poetry recitation by children of the local Hampden Gurney CE Primary School – it being National Poetry Day. Animated conversation then took place over refreshments. The whole event was an impressive and rewarding display of local cooperation and good will by the various sections of the local multi-racial/religious and secular community.

Our annual Tyburn Fayre was held on 25 October, opened this year by Councillor Audrey Lewis, Lord Mayor of Westminster. Although the numbers were low, owing largely to another popular event on the same day, many good things were to be had, all beautifully displayed, with the assistance of a large number of friends and helpers. We always enjoy meeting old friends, and welcoming new ones, and are so grateful for all the support we receive in many different ways throughout the year.



A very joyful event for us after Christmas will be the Monastic Profession of Sr Mary Josephine, which will probably take place on 16 January. Please pray for her, and join us if you are able to.

As we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, we look to the inspiration of the Holy Family, and ask them to bless you, your families, and all your loved ones.

The Tyburn Nuns

Please pass Tyburn Talk on to a friend.