

## The Singing Community and the CD

Last Christmas we received, "a card for a community that loves singing". Where did this love begin? One of our first Sisters, Sister Hazel arrived clutching a guitar and more at ease playing and singing than speaking. Soon after, Sister Lynda, a shy twenty-one-year old, joined us with her classical guitar. Although it took a little while to coax it out of her she was exceptionally gifted musically and with a singing voice that soared to the heavens. Within a few years she was composing.

The other Sisters, although not so gifted had reasonable voices and so we sang our way through our prayers and visitors' weekends with musical evenings. Sister Lynda sang on the wards at Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology accompanied by comments such as, "You should be on the telly". The requests for us to record a CD, in those days it was a cassette, began to be made frequently. We noted it but we were busy in so many other ways that it never happened. Sister Hazel and Sister Lynda made one attempt helped by a friend at St Mary's but it didn't work out – perhaps we were too busy and it wasn't God's time.

So the years passed. Meanwhile Sister Beatrice joined us and she was able to play the guitar and the mouth organ. Sister Louise, an accomplished singer and proficient also with a recorder, followed her. She also began to compose. Two other Sisters who had joined us also had good voices. There were often beautiful harmonies when we sang together. The subject of a CD kept coming up as visitors asked us if we would do it. We began to put out feelers not quite knowing how to proceed but they came to nothing. Then the Lord acted.

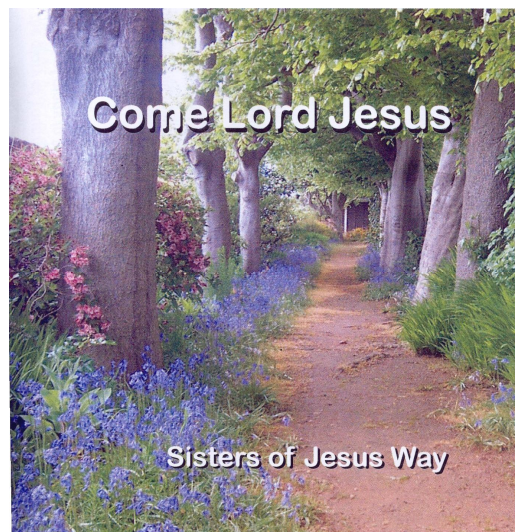
A couple we had never met before came to stay with us in November 09. He heard us sing once only in our morning prayers. As he was going out of the door he said to the two Sisters in the entrance hall that he had a recording studio and that we should record a CD. Sometimes the Holy Spirit gives an inner certainty that the time is right and he also gave us a sense of urgency. None of us guessed for a moment why we had the sense of urgency or that it would be accomplished through a vale of tears.

Within two months four Sisters were travelling to Tony's studio in Liverpool. Four days, all that we could spare, were spent in the Liverpool studio. By now all 23 tracks had been composed by either Sister Lynda or Sister Louise. Although it was a new experience the four Sisters relaxed as they chatted together in Tony's kitchen before returning to the basement studio. Alongside intense concentration there was good fun and enjoyment. Simultaneously our troubles began because Sister Lynda, after having had a viral infection and practising, strained her voice. Although much can be done to boost a voice with modern recording equipment she was understandably not happy with that. We decided to wait until she could go back herself

We began and almost completed the artwork using our own pictures. Tony kept patiently reminding us about the CD. Even as it was, he was totally enthusiastic. "Listen to this!" he had said to a friend. Later he said that he listened and recorded much Christian music but that every time he listened to ours he experienced the peace of God. The months passed, Sister Lynda's voice was gaining strength with the help of a speech therapist but she was not well. Then the blow fell; she had ovarian cancer. The last thought in our minds was the unfinished CD.

Our gifted Sister Lynda died within a few months of the diagnosis. We kept singing through our tears even at her funeral at her request. The CD however was not the first priority. Tony, who was convinced that this CD was special, still did not give up!

Four months after Lynda's death and almost two years after we had decided to go ahead Sister Louise returned to Liverpool after the three Sisters involved had listened to the recording. She was able to correct a few minor errors. We realised that with our Advent mailing it would be helpful if we had the CDs by Christmas and time was not now on our side. Tony acted quickly and copies of the CD came to each one of us for comment. By then we were all having much needed breaks and it was 9<sup>th</sup> November before Sister Louise could return again to Liverpool. A little more time



was lost as now Tony had to go away for a few days but at the beginning of December our CD was posted to Northampton and then on to France to go into production.

To our great relief the CDs arrived here December 15<sup>th</sup> and with the help of friends 250 were distributed in one week. The response has been heart warming. "Beautiful" is the most frequent response, often with the word "absolutely" in front of it. We are greatly appreciative that Tony stuck with us and helped make it such a beautiful and clear recording.

Two months before Sister Lynda died a brother joined us. He too is musical playing the guitar alongside us. So the songs continue in praise of our loving Lord and heavenly Father. He has blessed us by making us a "singing community".

*The CD, "Come, Lord Jesus", is available from the Sisters – email  
[sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk](mailto:sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk) or telephone (0151) 6258775 We are suggesting a donation of £7 for each CD to  
cover our costs.*