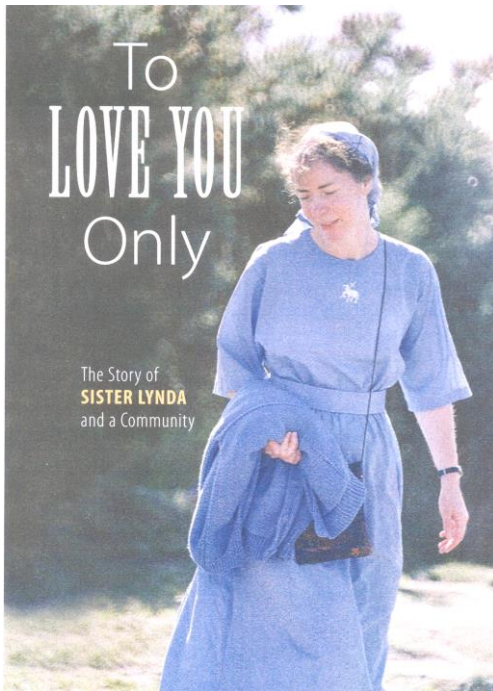


## To Love You Only.



We don't remember a conscious decision to write a book. It just seemed to happen. In May 2010 a Sister, who was not in the habit of keeping a journal, decided to keep a diary for a year. In her mind she called it, "Twelve months in the life of a community". It was only afterwards that she realised that it was a prompting from the Holy Spirit. Mercifully she had no idea what that year would have in store. Meanwhile Sister Lynda, who had kept a journal for many years, was also scribbling away every evening. These two documents became foundational to the book. There was no dithering over what happened and when. It was there in ink. Only the Lord could have prepared the ground in such a way.

We early on decided to write, alongside the life of Lynda, the story of our community. Booklets had been produced but even the most recent had been written years ago and much had happened since then. We also knew that this book had to be honest and open. Many people have no idea about community life. A Sister is sometimes asked, "Will they let you out?!" We have never discovered who the mysterious "they" is. We have tried to take the lid off community, to show it as it really is, in all its humanity and yet with a touch of the glory of God.

The title of the book came later, "To Love You Only", and subtitle, "The Story of Sister Lynda and a Community". Lynda's first love was Jesus, her trust was in her Heavenly Father and she wholeheartedly tried to follow the Holy Spirit. When she was at university, "one of the men students fell in love with her. Was she to continue this relationship when there was within her a call which she couldn't clearly define but which she sensed would not be the way of marriage?" So she came to the Sisters of Jesus Way and joyfully gave her heart afresh to Jesus at her Bridal Consecration some years later. "It is the happiest day of my life", she wrote in her diary.

Her love for Jesus led her into unexpected places. As we completed the building of Bethany, she balanced on the roof of the house admiring the view, praising God and painting. "She had no fear of heights. She shouted down to us about the wonderful view. Our hearts were in our mouths. Those of us on the ground were the ones who were afraid." Less to her natural inclinations was taking charge of the catering. She wrote, "At the nudging of the Holy Spirit I practise the presence of God in the kitchen. When I am scrubbing potatoes, for instance – with the scrubbing of each potato I express inwardly such words as, 'I am loved by the Son, I am loved by the Holy Spirit' – it all depends on how many potatoes there are!"

For many years she sang in the wards of Clatterbridge Cancer Centre. "One patient expressed it this way: 'Sister Lynda, whose life shone light into my time at the Cancer Centre.' Another wrote, 'Thank you, Lynda, for having portrayed to us all the voice of an angel.' It was by this that she became known in the hospital, 'the singing angel'."

We have been somewhat surprised to find ourselves in the Church of England. "We all agreed that it was the will of God that we become Anglicans and nothing has happened since the decision was made that has changed our minds. Despite this it was a culture shock". "Lynda's humour bubbled over as she watched some of her Sisters, out of politeness, awkwardly and self-consciously genuflecting. She coughed her way through clouds of incense." "A friend wrote of, 'her infectious smile and naughty grin'. That described her. In some situations her humour was unstoppable."

Then came the devastating diagnosis, "In this appointment I was told that I had cancer", Lynda wrote in her diary, "I have asked the Lord Jesus, 'In these days please draw me to you, I want to be near to you...'" It was only a few brief months before the gates of heaven opened. "We were left with our grief. There was a sense of unreality." "Someone once said to us, 'A community isn't a community until it has a Sister in heaven'. We now know what that means."

"To Love You Only" has already travelled to many places in the UK but also, Germany, Switzerland, France, USA, Australia and Fiji. We have had many appreciative comments but will share only two that came in the last few days, "I think it is a wonderful book. I am not sure what words to use really because it is a very powerful, moving and honest story and challenging too. We don't have all the answers in this life but there is still a way through". "The book is an absolute treasure, deeply moving and at the same time totally down to earth."

Quotations apart from the last two are from "To Love You Only".

Available from Sisters of Jesus Way. Email [sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk](mailto:sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk) Tel 0151 6258775  
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