

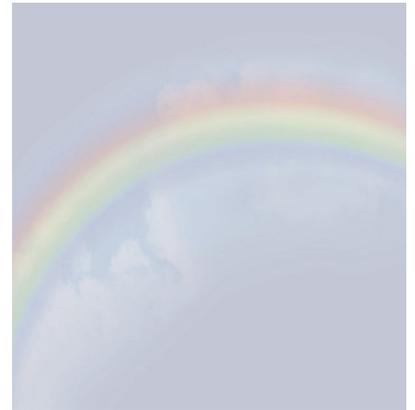
SISTERS OF JESUS WAY

Advent Newsletter

All Saints Day 2013

Our dear friends,

Our letter is rather early this year for a special reason. We now have the book, "To Love You Only". This tells the story of Sister Lynda's life and also the story of our community. It was written by one of the Sisters and includes many references from Lynda's diaries. There are some beautiful colour photographs. This has largely been the effort of another Sister. Add proof reading, correcting etc. to that and it has been a joint effort. We have had many kind friends assisting us. We know that many of you are eagerly awaiting its publication. Our publisher suggested that we open the boxes on All Saints Day, which seemed very appropriate. We have tried to keep the cost down as far as possible.



We have included a leaflet giving details about ordering a copy of the book and also our CD. We have been delighted the way this has travelled – the most unexpected letters, emails or phone calls arrive here from folk we have never met who are requesting a CD, or sometimes multiple copies. Also included is another leaflet giving details of various weekends led by the Sisters in the first six months of next year. Our best advice if you are online is to go to our web page, www.redacre.org.uk This will keep you up to date with all that is happening. There are also some helpful thoughts for the day and some attractive pictures of our garden and the Wirral. We never tire of our beautiful estuary, always changing, as the tide ebbs and flows.

The summer was busy, as we harvested our crops. Many willing hands helped us with the preparation and freezing of pears, apples, runner beans, plums, raspberries and much else. Our tomatoes are delicious and it is always a sad day when the season comes to an end! The vine, after such a good summer, produced an abundance of grapes. We were busy too, with guests. Some weeks, as soon as a room was vacated, we were quickly making the bed and the next occupant arrived the same day. In that area too we are very grateful for all the help we have had. Our regular helpers are a very special and select band!

There was however one sad event in August. Our dear Sister Divina, a Sister of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, died. Not many of you will have met her but those who come to our retreats will often have heard her name, as we frequently quote her. Her friendship and motherly love profoundly influenced us over the years. In many ways we are who we are, because she took pity on us many years ago and helped us spiritually. She always kept in touch by letter and telephone, even when she was no longer in the UK but back in her motherhouse in Darmstadt, Germany. She died a short time after her 95th birthday but, as many of you know, that does not make the parting any easier. Our last conversation was about three months before her death. As by then her deafness was increasing it was rather one-sided. She kept going for a full 30 minutes and every sentence was pure gold. We shall miss her dearly.

Two of our Sisters travelled to Germany so that we could be represented at her funeral. Her body was laid to rest in the Mary Sisters' beautiful garden but we know that she has risen with Christ and is now with him in glory. As she said to Lynda when she was terminally ill, "You will fall asleep and when you wake up you will see Jesus". She often reminded us that every day is a preparation for heaven, a fact that we often forget.

Recently we read about a Night Office (Prayer) where one by one the candles are extinguished until one candle remains. In these last years two bright candles have been extinguished in our lives but the light of Christ shines most strongly in the darkness of loss. Soon it will be Advent, ushering in Christmas, when some feel most keenly the loss of what once was and is now no longer. If Christmas says anything, it says that light has come into this dark world. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world". That light has never been quenched.

The psalmist writes, "The Lord is my light", but closes his psalm with the words, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord". (Ps 27:14) Wait for his light. We are not good at waiting. If we fail the test, so to

speaking, when we miss a train or stand irritably in the supermarket queue, what chance do we stand in the more serious areas of our lives? The answer is none at all! Impatience will trip us up again and again. We are wise if we learn to wait in patience in situations large and small, not least when we feel darkness around us and possibly within and we long for the presence of Christ.

Some of us jump into trouble in a situation because we are impatient. We do not wait for God to act on our behalf. We cannot tolerate being in the darkness of uncertainty. Yet those who have walked many years with the Lord know that he never comes too late. Twice the Lord allowed us to go to the edge of a precipice when we needed a house. It was the same when we were building Bethany, our motherhouse; we never had enough money to complete it. We went down to our last penny but as we came to the next phase in the building the cash was there. We clung on in obedience to the Lord's word to us not to make our needs known to anyone but our heavenly Father in prayer. If we love the Lord we will be obedient to him. Sometimes, like the children of Israel, he has to lead us through desert situations so that we can learn that obedience.

The temptation comes to solve difficult situations by acting, as the world acts. Satan can dangle a solution in front of us but, if it isn't God's will, it is better to live with uncertainty than a guilty conscience afterwards and the consequences of our hasty actions. Once in our very early days before we had a house, we were offered one but there was an "if". If we would do certain things and conform to a particular situation then it was ours. If our eyes had been only on our desperate need for somewhere to live, and not on the Lord, we would have gone astray. By his mercy the Lord kept our eyes on him and his promises to us. Here we are now, many years later, with two beautiful houses in the place that the heavenly Father chose for us.

Often our undoing is fear. It would have partly been this if we had jumped the wrong way when we badly needed a house. We try to resolve a situation out of anxiety. So we leap and end up making matters worse! There is a time to act and a time to wait. If we listen to the Holy Spirit he will tell us what to do when. It takes courage when our anxieties are rising. The Lord can give us peace if we confess our fears to him. Faith is still faith if we stay obedient, however much our heart is quaking or our knees knocking!

The Lord never asks us to stand up for our rights. Yet often this is our first reaction in some situations. Similarly we respond to criticism and opposition by reacting angrily. All the time the Lord is saying, "Wait". He will come to our rescue. We have seen this so many times. There is a time to speak and a time to keep silent. Blessed are those who listen to the Holy Spirit. In the end it is the Lord who justifies his own, not we justifying ourselves in a hostile situation.

Sometimes the darkness is not caused by a situation around us; it may be that it is in our hearts - the blackness of grief, the gloom of the unloved and lonely, the sombreness of failure or rejection. The shadows gather within us. They face us each morning and disturb our sleep at night. It is easy to try to escape such darkness by non-stop activity of one sort or the other. Only the Lord can bring healing light to our inner being. He will, if we trust him. It is only those who have faith who are able to wait for the Lord when he delays, until a word from him scatters the darkness.

Trust is based on the fact that he loves us. He loves us, therefore we can trust him, we trust him, and therefore we can wait for him in simple obedience to all he has taught us. All this is not learnt overnight. There are many falls before such trust begins to grow. It is a lesson once learnt that is not easily forgotten. We look back and see how he has intervened on our behalf when we have waited. We have experienced him coming into our darkness and saying, "My children". We know that we are loved. He delays and we know that his delays are to deepen our trust and confidence in his love. He has never failed us, nor will he in the future. Wait for the Lord, in patience and trust.

A blessed Advent and Christmas,

With our love,

Sisters of Jesus Way

