

Sisters of Jesus Way

Advent/Christmas letter 2021

He laid His glory by,
He wrapped Him in our clay. (C. Wesley)

Blessed are the poor in spirit
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. (Matt.5:3 NIV)



Our dear friends,

We rejoice in God's indescribable gift to us in Jesus, as we approach Christmas.

We have always enjoyed hearing the bells ringing at this time of the year but what we hear today are alarm bells. A hard Christmas, gas shortage, no food on the shelves, no turkey in the oven, no gas to cook it, rising prices - which as a community, we are caught up in, as indeed you all are, but the Christmas bells still ring with good news that a Saviour has been born, a rescuer, a deliverer. He is coming with good news, says Matthew, for the poor in spirit. (Matt 5:3) They are the "blessed ones" for "theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

A few years ago I came to a very low point in my life. I went to see the doctor and he said, "How is your mood?" I didn't know what he meant so I said, "I'm not a moody person". "No," he said, "I mean, are you low in spirit?" I suppose he meant, "Are you depressed?" When Jesus talks about the blessed being poor in spirit he means something quite different.

When I googled "poor in spirit" in Matthew, there were 99,700 results. I didn't look them all up! But I thought the first one was getting near the truth.

"Always lowly in his own eyes. He does not exalt himself; he is not proud. Even though he may be considered insignificant by others, he sees it all as God's will and rejoices that he is allowed to share in the sufferings of Christ. It becomes natural for him to go the way of the Lamb; humiliation becomes his nourishment, exaltation his reward". (1 Peter 5:5; 1 Peter 4:13; 1 Peter 5:6) Taken from "Active Christianity".



The best example is Jesus himself, "....who did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." (Phil 2: 6,7 NIV). That is the true meaning of Christmas and amazingly we are given the privilege of sharing in that.

This is God's gift at Christmas. It takes some getting our head around, that Almighty God should stoop so low as to "wrap Himself in our clay," (Charles Wesley) but when we begin to grasp it, it becomes our comfort and courage to persevere.

The year has brought sadness to us as several members of our Community have had family problems and issues to face in terms of care. It has also been a year of joyful celebrations. One of the highlights was the Thanksgiving and Dedication of our refurbished chapel, with its lovely limestone sanctuary area and new oak framed doors and window frames, with, at that point in time, clear glass, giving us wonderful views of the garden. Then later the joy of our new stained glass windows which are different but truly amazing.

Bishop Keith was with us for this occasion, giving us the opportunity to say farewell to him prior to his retirement and enabling us to express our thanks to him for his fatherly care of us. We were delighted to sing at his Farewell Service in Chester Cathedral.

We then had the joy of welcoming Bishop Mark, the new Diocesan Bishop of Chester as our Bishop Guardian and were able to welcome him in a small way with a Service of Blessing.

We were able to join in the Anglican Religious Communities Conference by Zoom in April, where several different Communities shared something of their experience. Two of our Sisters shared about our Community life. This was an enriching experience.

The easing of lockdown enabled us to have a Pentecost retreat which was a wonderful occasion of sharing, worship, dance and healing ministry.

Those who are now able to visit us (and we can only have 6 at a time and for a limited period of four days) will see many changes in the house and garden. Our guest rooms are now en suite and fitted with hospitality trays, and blinds have been fitted to windows, which do not block out entirely our magnificent views. Sunsets and night skies have been amazing; the garden has been abundant in crops of fruit and many varieties of flowers. The runner beans have produced an excellent harvest and the raspberries have been so fruitful that we have been able to have summer puddings (a favourite among the Community) on several occasions.



We are hoping to have a few celebration weekends or days between January and June and we invite you to book in for one of these now. Remember we can only have 6 people overnight so it will be first come, first served. A Celebration Leaflet is enclosed with this letter.

Now we ask the Heavenly Father to give you a blessed, happy and peaceful Christmas. Jesus is our joy!

With love from us all,
Sisters of Jesus Way and Brother of the Way.

Sisters of Jesus Way, Redacre, 24 Abbey Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 7EP.
Tel No. 0151 625 8775. E-mail: sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk
Website: www.redacre.org.uk

