Sisters of Jesus Way



Autumn Newsletter 2023

Our Dear Friends,

Recently the book *Discipleship* by David Watson came to my attention when I was looking for a theme for a short talk on one aspect of the Holy Spirit. In one chapter, entitled 'Life in the Spirit', I came across the following:

> "The Spirit assures us of our salvation. When we cry 'Abba, Father!' it is the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. Once we have this deep, inner assurance variously called 'the witness of the Spirit' or the 'sealing of the Spirit' then we can be ready for anything, through Christ who strengthens us."

This reminded me of John Wesley's experience when called to his father's bedside as he lay dying. Having only just made it in time, he was able to hear Samuel's final words to him: "The inward witness; this is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity." John Wesley knew that he hadn't experienced this for himself, until his conversion at Aldersgate Street when his "heart was strangely warmed."

Once we have this assurance for ourselves we can start learning to live by the Spirit each day, listening to His promptings. We as a community seek together to live this way. And now one of our Sisters will give a word of testimony:

> *"His Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." The early Methodists called this the doctrine of assurance. "My God, I know I feel thee mine," they would sing. When I was in my middle teens, a very long time ago, I was fascinated by the story of John Wesley and did a project at school on the Wesley brothers. Again I met up with this experience of the assurance of sins forgiven and new life in Christ. The Christian journey is a long and fascinating journey –different for each of us– and is a precious, heart-warming discovery of a Father who loves us, a Saviour who protects us and a Spirit, holy and renewing, living within us. Being challenged to allow this experience to become my own, I gave my life to Christ. Then I knew that he was truly alive and I wanted the whole world to know it too!*
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> *I was conscious from an early age that I had a kind Heavenly Father who protects us. He didn't always provide what I wanted, hoped for or even prayed for but he was always there. My first experience of God was of his Fatherhood. He was there in the storms of life, even the strong winds of 1947: when the bedroom window was blown in, smashing my bed, I wasn't in it! Wisdom decreed sleeping on the sofa downstairs. The prayer I offered that night, as a 10 year old, was for protection and he granted it. Could I ever doubt him? Yes. I grew up anxious and fearful, but as the song says "He gave me a heart, and He gave me a smile, He gave me Jesus and he made me His child". That relationship became more meaningful as I grew up and followed his call to serve him full time in the church. It was quite a test to leave the security of home, as an only child, and go to college. But it was an experience that I loved as I learnt to be a part of a college family with its sharing of home-made fun as well as learning. We acted like children and looking back I see that that was the beginning of working out what it was to be a child of God.*

Then the Heavenly Father led me into a different sort of Community – our Community of Sisters and Brothers known as 'Jesus Way'. This was and is a journey of faith and trust that the Heavenly Father will provide for all our needs, and after more than 40 years of living this way what more can I say than, "His Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God," and what more could I desire? He is a good Father. He is enough.

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Now for our Community update. We begin with a reminder that we have changed the timing of our newsletters; they now go out in Spring and Autumn, and this one will be the last mailing of the year. Back in May we had the pleasure of welcoming Sue – who has known us for many years – to be a member of the Followers of the Lamb (our small group of associates), at a special service in our Chapel. We are grateful for all the practical and prayer support the Followers give us. We have also recently had a young lady from Switzerland helping us for a few weeks, and we currently have someone living alongside us. Both have been a great blessing.



This summer we introduced a marquee into our garden. This proved very useful for summer events: a cream tea and a barbecue for the Cancer Friends Together group, and another barbecue for our general visitors. Some of our house guests enjoyed popping in there at other times, too! As we come to the end of the season it is now time to take it down.

Two of the Sisters recently had the privilege of attending the annual meeting of the Melanesian Mission UK, held this year at Chester Cathedral. We have an informal friendship link with the Sisters of Melanesia, so it was helpful to be brought up to date with the situation there. The day included presentations on coastal erosion and illegal logging, which are particular challenges facing the islands.

As usual, we are enclosing our programme of events for the coming months. There is always something special about drawing close to the Lord Jesus at the start of Advent, before the Christmas rush takes over. Our New Year Celebration proves popular every year and spaces go 'like hot cakes'; we are able to welcome local people to join us on New Year's Eve itself, when we give thanks for the past year and recommit ourselves to the Lord for the next. As we move on to Lent, we offer a day of quiet reflection (only for those who can resist talking!). Then this programme finishes with our Easter services, beautiful and rich in meaning as we adore the Lord who suffered for us and rejoice in His resurrection life.

May you each know the Lord's sustaining grace, guidance and shielding power throughout the rest of this year and into the next.

With love from us all,

Sisters of Jesus Way and Brother of the Way.



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