

Sisters of Jesus Way

Advent 2020

We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace. John 1:14 NIV

Our Dear Friends,

We have had the most amazing skies over the river Dee this year and right up to the present day. On several occasions a Sister has announced, "Have you seen the sky?" and we have all made for the nearest window with expressions of "Ooh!" and "Aah!". The colours have ranged from deep orange to pinks and mauves, turquoise and purples. They have been indescribable and none of our photographs (and we have taken many) give justice to the reality.



I wonder if John felt like this when he was trying to describe the incarnation and could only say, "We have seen his glory, full of grace". Truly the glory of God can never be captured in words or pictures, yet there it is in the babe in the manger. We have this word "full of grace" to help us. The glory of God is so much more than "light". It is a weighty word (doxa) and expresses everything from honour, nobility and royalty to gentleness, compassion and warmth. It is a full word and John uses it to describe the coming of Jesus into our dark world.

The glory of God covers our land and because we have experienced so much darkness in recent months it seems the glory of God shines much brighter. It is important that we keep our eyes on His glory and not on the darkness of the pandemic, international politics, the economy, austerity or anything else that might cause us anxiety.



Describing this glory John chooses the word "grace". Grace is the undeserved love of God, which cannot be earned or bought or striven for but comes as a free gift. Jesus is full of grace. This is why we can talk about living by grace. As we fix our eyes on Jesus we are drawn into His grace and then we can be gracious in our attitude to others. The anxiety that so many feel, and Christians are not immune, can cause us to become critical and blame others where in reality no-one is to blame. Grace softens our hearts and we are able to be merciful and gracious in our relationships. So we pray that we might this Christmas grasp more firmly what it is to live by grace.

For us as a Community the year has brought many challenges. Lockdown for us didn't bring the relaxation that some were able to enjoy, or the boredom that some had to endure but it did give us the opportunity to redecorate the whole of Redacre after the rewiring and to see our building work progress. The Brothers locked down with us in March and have become first rate painters and decorators but they are not to be hired out!

Our great joy on Oct 2nd was to be able to celebrate Holy Communion (Covid rules in place) in our new chapel. It all came together suddenly at the end. The builders had almost finished, the carpets were laid and the painting completed, new oak window frames and door frames were in place and we were delighted with them. Then our Vicar, Rev Nikki Eastwood, asked to visit us and suddenly we saw the possibility of celebrating Holy Communion. Our builders pulled out all the stops to complete and even made us, overnight, an oak tray for our small communion glasses and we were there. The date was significant too as our Trust Deed had been signed on Oct 2nd 1979. It was a very special occasion and we say thank you to all those who made it possible, our builders, electricians, plumbers and carpet supplier. We still await our new stained glass windows. These are likely to be early in the new year.



We also say a big thank you to those of you who have seen our need of many months without guests and have sent us gifts, and again it was with a heart full of thankfulness that we reached our year end (August) free of

debt. We would like to share how one night we found, pushed through our door, an envelope with a large gift inside, followed by three more envelopes with gifts in, that were popped through our door shortly afterwards. We have also received many gifts in kind and we thank all of you for your kindness and generosity.

We are also thankful that we have remained clear of the pandemic in spite of being in a high risk area. Thank you for your prayers around this one.

The landscaping of our little land after all the building work has continued and our new pond is now well established. We have enjoyed owning four new koi carp but we have lost one to the heron. A friend from our church had goldfish that she wanted a good home for and suddenly we had the gift of 38 goldfish. We are enjoying them all.



You are probably wondering what has been happening to our cat, Christie, and our rescue dog, Jake. Christie is now 17 years old but still full of life. However she is deaf and has the loudest meow imaginable. Jake has found all the building work hard to cope with but remains a very special dog. He has reached the age when he has seen fit to assert himself and can be extremely rebellious at times. But we love him in spite of his naughtiness.

You will all want to know when we will be able to take guests again. We are working on a Covid risk assessment at the moment and altering some rooms in Redacre to make it possible to have five or six guests. So yes, we still have builders. A fire risk assessment has also to be made. We had hoped and still hope that we can take guests from January but at first it will be by invitation and probably only two or three people to begin with. We will be working on a rota of guests from Thursday to Monday with Tuesday to Thursday set aside for deep cleaning. We suggest that you keep an eye on the notice board on our website which we will try to keep up to date in the new year.

While we were mourning the loss of guests we found ourselves in a new, if small, ministry when Morrisons, our local supermarket, asked us to take over-ordered or near end-of-date best food off their hands. This we now collect once or twice a week. It is set out in trays in our front drive and people we know who are working with those who are struggling to make ends meet, asylum seekers or the house-bound come and collect and distribute it. We are grateful to be able to help in this way those who are struggling.

Our link with the Sisters of Melanesia has continued with one of our Sisters taking responsibility for keeping in touch with them. We were able to send books and gardening tools via a Melanesian Companion who lives on Wirral.

We have also been grateful that we are a Community and so are able to meet for prayer and worship and we can sing! We feel so blessed in this and remember especially those of you who live alone and for whom another national lockdown has enforced a sense of loneliness. We pray for you especially each Monday.

We send greetings now for a blessed Christmas:

May the Lord touch your life with His glory;
May the good news of Christ cheer your heart;
May God's good will uphold you;
And may great joy flood your soul.

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

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