Sisters of Jesus Way



Autumn Newsletter 2024

Our Dear Friends,

We recently held our Harvest Weekend, when we were able to give thanks for all the practical ways in which the Heavenly Father cares for us. The front of our Chapel looked colourful with a little display of our garden produce (including raspberries, blackberries, apples, runner beans and tomatoes) and our own gladioli. For the second year, we have had a marquee in the garden over the summer and used it for barbecues, a cream tea and as an extra space to sit. Today as we write it is being dismantled and we are grateful for the gifts of dry weather and an experienced friend to help us do this! A big thank you to all of you who have helped or advised us during the year, and to all who have been channels of the Lord's financial or material provision. May you know His blessing in return.

If you have been to stay in the last eighteen months or so, you might have met Deborah, who has been living alongside us. In May we had the joy of receiving her as a Sister of the Way (our equivalent of a novice), her first big milestone in the long process of joining our Community. We held a special commitment service for her in our Chapel, attended by members of Deborah's family and friends and some representative Community friends. We were pleased to have Bishop Mark, our Bishop Guardian, and Revd Nikki, our Vicar, conducting the service.



We are grateful to have occasional contact with other Communities. In April we attended a Zoom conference for Anglican Religious Communities, and in July, two of us made a trip to London to attend a day gathering; as part of this trip we were also able to spend time with the Evangelical Sisters of Mary in Radlett.

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Just recently, three of us spent a short time at a friend's 80th birthday party. This friend, who is still very active, enjoyed a full day of celebration outdoors at a barbecue. The next day he had volunteered to help set up a children's climbing frame for a friend. When he arrived, the friend had gone fishing! Not easily deterred, he still built the climbing frame on his own, but came home totally exhausted. Naturally he was not very pleased. When we heard this story, it seemed to be a clear example of someone's self-will, *i.e.* a person doing what he wanted to do by going fishing and leaving an 80-year-old with all the work. We thought we would look briefly in this newsletter at the sin of self-will which can so easily trip all of us up. We as a Community are as likely as anyone else to fall into this. Like all Communities, we have a Rule of Life, written under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; we read this every day at one of our meals, in bite-sized chunks. One section reads: "Self-will in even the smallest things causes conflict and disharmony. Our wills are no longer our own; they have been yielded to the Lord Jesus Christ." It was written as a reminder to continually seek to stay in the will of God. For us, this means looking to God's will in the small and big things. Only as we surrender our own will and together, follow His will, can He protect and provide for us, and produce fruit that will last, bringing glory to Him. Again a song came to mind (see box).

Jesus, all for Jesus:
All I am and have
And ever hope to be.
Jesus, all for Jesus:
All I am and have
And ever hope to be

All of my
Ambitions, hopes, and plans
I surrender these
Into Your hands.
All of my
Ambitions, hopes, and plans
I surrender these
Into Your hands.

For it's only in
Your will that I am free.

Jennifer Atkinson / Robin Mark
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The choices we make impact on others around us, whether this is at work, at home, at church, or in a Community. Imagine the following fictional scenario about a Community of five Sisters. It is early afternoon on Friday, and four individual guests are due to arrive. Sister Lily is away on holiday. Sister Rose has taken Sister Ivy to a hospital appointment. Sister Daisy has been hoping all week for an opportunity to try out a new cake recipe, and today she is determined that she will do it. When she gets to the kitchen, she discovers that she is one egg short. She grabs a car key and drives off to the local supermarket. Sister Holly is in the office, bracing herself to make a difficult phone call to the insurance company. She is just about to dial the number when the doorbell rings. Sister Daisy doesn't seem to be around so she goes to answer it, and shows a guest up to his room. He is full of questions and she can feel the time slipping away. Meanwhile she can hear the phone ringing in the background with no one to pick it up. Sister Daisy returns and goes straight to the kitchen to start the cake. As the other guests arrive, Sister Holly now resigns herself to leaving the insurance call till Monday, although she would have preferred it off her mind.



Many of us have been there: tempted to pursue our own agenda no matter what, or else left in the lurch by another's choices! Perhaps we have been in both roles at different times. The only way through for Sister Holly is to come to a trusting acceptance ('Yes, Father!'). This would have been the best way for Sister Daisy, too. It is not the same as resignation; trusting the Lord is the key, and it is a learning process. When we do this, He will make things work out for us in His own time, not ours.

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Enclosed with this newsletter is our Celebration Leaflet with details of organised days and weekends coming up over the next few months. We begin with our Advent Weekend at the very end of November. This is always a special time when we can express our love for the Lord Jesus before the pre-Christmas rush sets in! Then we have our popular New Year Retreat, when we renew our covenant with the Lord in a special midnight service. As we move into Lent we are again offering a Quiet Day to listen to the Lord's voice in scripture (only for those who can resist talking!). Our current programme ends with the Easter services when we reflect deeply on our Lord's sufferings and enter into the joy of His Resurrection.

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As this will be our last newsletter of the year, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed Advent, Christmas and New Year. May you each experience the special closeness of the Lord.

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: 0151 625 8775 E-mail: sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk
Website: www.redacre.org.uk

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