Sisters of Jesus Way



Autumn Newsletter 2025

Our dear Friends,

We begin with a verse of scripture:

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV).

Thanksgiving is highlighted in Paul's letters and weaves its way throughout the Bible as a whole. It has also become a key part of our way of life as a Community. However, in this verse, Paul states that we should give thanks 'in all circumstances'. That is something we may feel is not always possible! When things are going well and the circumstances are favourable then yes, it's easy. But how can we do this when life is tough?

Corrie ten Boom struggled with this when she and her sister Betsie were in Ravensbrück. They were confined in barracks that were swarming with fleas! When she realised about the fleas, Corrie cried out to Betsie, 'How can we live in such a place?' After Betsie prayed, she went on to remind Corrie of this verse in 1 Thessalonians 5, which they had read just that morning. Betsie pointed out that they could give thanks for being together, for having a Bible, and for the fact that the overcrowding enabled them to share words of scripture with those around them. However, when Betsie then said that they also needed to give thanks for the fleas, this caused Corrie to stumble. She really felt that Betsie was wrong about this. Eventually, though, she did find that she could give thanks even for the fleas, when it came to light that the guards would not enter the barracks because of them - meaning that the guards never found their precious Bible!

Paul himself wrote many of his letters from prison, chained to guards. It was from his own experience that he was able to write about 'giving thanks in all circumstances', because he knew that there was always something to be found in every situation.

Now one of our Sisters will give a word of testimony:

A good many years ago now, I spent three weeks helping in a large community of Sisters and Brothers. I was part of an international team, looked after by a Sister, who was like a little mother to us all. We met with her each morning and shared from our own quiet times with the Lord Jesus. Either as part of this or separately, we had a time of thanksgiving. We were each asked to share something we were thankful to God for. I really couldn't think of anything to say or share! This was quite a challenge for me, but eventually, through what the others shared, I began to realise how many things I could give thanks for!

As a result of hearing about this experience, our own Community began to include regular times of thanksgiving in our life together. It grew to be a great encouragement to ourselves and to each other, and it has become almost second nature to us now. Of course, there are still situations where we can't necessarily give thanks for the difficulty itself, but we can give thanks that we have a loving God who knows the bigger picture and will have the final word.

Now for our Community news. We have had a steady flow of visitors all summer and continuing on into the autumn. In June we held our first Heaven Day for a number of years, and this was well attended. Such days, when we seek to enter into Heaven in heart and mind through scripture, song and readings, are always meaningful and moving, and the Lord graciously drew close with His Presence. The Chapel was decorated beautifully with white and yellow roses, a golden cloth backed with white lace, and pictures of angels. The following day we scattered coloured petals around the Chapel as part of our Community celebration of Pentecost. Our Quiet Day in July proved particularly popular. There is always a need for quiet moments in our busy world. Also in July, we had the privilege of hosting a Ukrainian group for the first time, through a local contact. In August we held two barbecues in our marquee, one for the Cancer

Friends Together group, and one for general visitors. Both were well supported and were blessed with suitable weather. These finished with a time of praise and worship together.

As always, a great variety of things happen here in the background apart from our visible guest ministry. Two of us took part in a Vocations Day for the Diocese in June, for people beginning to explore different areas of ministry. We continue to have informal contact with the Melanesian communities and several of us were able to attend an online meeting in June with the Sisters of Melanesia and their UK Associates. In early September we held a small private service in our Chapel to re-commission our Community leaders for a second term of office. We recently attended the induction of the new vicar at our local church, St Mary's. Some of us continue to have a concern for particular family members, and sadly two of us lost elderly relatives over the summer. In the house, a number of items have needed replacing or upgrading. As we write, we are in the process of replacing several computers, which have served us for a good number of years but are becoming obsolete as Windows 10 is discontinued. We are also having some new carpets fitted in certain rooms in Redacre, as the old ones have been looking tired. We are so thankful that the Heavenly Father has provided for us in advance to be able to make these necessary changes, and has led us to reliable people with suitable expertise. Like many organisations, we are continually working to improve our Safeguarding precautions and training, and are grateful for the advice we get with this. Outside, the overgrown trees and shrubs at the front of the house were cut back by some tree surgeons just before Easter, and an unhealthy eucalyptus tree and beech tree were taken down. A large old garden shed is currently undergoing some major repairs, and a new wood store has been constructed, both with the help of a faithful volunteer. We have had a bumper apple harvest (this seems to have been a good year) and have been storing away baking apples (over 300!), giving away dozens more, and chopping and stewing the rest, again with occasional help.



Enclosed with this newsletter is our Celebration Leaflet for the coming six months. Our Advent Weekend is fast approaching. This is a special time when we can look back to the Lord's coming as a baby at Bethlehem and forward to His return in glory and majesty. We close the house over Christmas itself but reopen on New Year's Eve for our New Year Celebration, praising God for what is past and trusting Him for what is to come. As the year moves forward into Lent, we are offering time aside for reflection in our Lent Quiet Day. Finally, our programme finishes with the special Easter services from Maundy Thursday through to Easter Day.

For now, that seems a long way ahead as we are just beginning the countdown to Advent! We hope to see some of you soon, but this will be our last newsletter of the year, so we will take this early opportunity to wish everyone a blessed and joyful Christmas season.

With love from us all,

Sisters of Jesus Way and Brother of the Way.

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