

The Carmelite News

SEPTEMBER — OCTOBER Number, 1960

WHITEFRIARS · FAVERSHAM · KENT

YOUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED

Most people get their names in the Sunday Notices only twice in their lives. When they are getting married and when they die. *"Your charitable prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of"* John Goodwin—or some name like that—and thereafter you are listed amongst *"those whose anniversaries occur about this time."* Never the prefix *Mr.* In the eyes of God you are just plain unvarnished Michael or John. Generally speaking the congregation breathe a hearty "Amen" to signify that they are in full agreement with you.

A Missionary meets peculiar names sometimes and if he hasn't read the notices beforehand he can suffer a shock. I remember meeting the name of "Dogsbody" and I stopped, looked, and pictured to myself how that was going to sound in an Irish accent. Finally I got it out. I asked the parish priest about it afterwards and he told me that locally it was pronounced "Digsby." Well, what do you know! The congregation agreed as usual; maybe they knew what I meant. One day we will all of us be just a name in the Notice Book once more and for ever afterwards we will be numbered with those "whose anniversaries occur about this time." "I am always being appalled," said Belloc, "at the shortness of life." When I think that it is twenty-five years since King Edward put aside his crown for a lady, and I recall it just like yesterday. A quarter of a century gone like the fogs of November.

Some genius in far off days chose November as the Month of the Holy Souls—a sensitive man. He knew

that the liturgy should match the seasons and he knew how the falling of the leaves reminds one of the doctrine of Purgatory. It helps men to realise that life is short, that all things come to an end, that men must die, and that after a period of rest there comes a new Resurrection. After the winter comes the spring. Meanwhile, *we should develop* as the years go on a greater love of the Holy Souls, they are *not less alive than we are*, but *more so*; so take down your missals and prepare the Masses of All Souls Day.

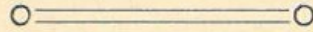
It is interesting to read old wills going back to medieval times. The pre-Reformation wills show a fine grasp of reality, they usually contain some provision for Masses for the repose of their souls. After the Reformation there came a great change. There was no mention of Purgatory, no request for prayers, but they certainly still believed in the good word, because many of them made sure of having it by leaving 10/- for a *good preacher at the funeral*. It is always nice to know that people will speak well of you at your funeral, even if they get a stipend for doing it.

The difference between a Catholic and a Protestant funeral is sometimes remarkable. Frozen immobility versus the "nice to see you again" spirit. When I went to Ireland last year to attend the funeral of my eldest sister, I hadn't been to an Irish funeral for a quarter of a century, and the difference was quite remarkable. First I met people that I thought were dead years ago. I met my own Godfather. He was hopping around as lively as a bee. Yet he must have been well on

in his twenties when he "stood" for me. Aidan Doyle of Tubberpatrick—the well of Patrick.

There is not a lot of difference between a wedding and a funeral in Ireland. At a funeral there are no speeches—but just about an equal amount of tears. One woman told me at my sister's funeral that she hadn't

enjoyed a "day out" like it in forty years. One reason why country funerals in Ireland are a social occasion is that the people wait round the grave until it is completely filled in. Then the shovels are crossed over it and the last "De Profundis" is recited. The twenty minutes interval gives people time to get round and say "Hello" to each other.



HERE AND THERE

A daughter of the Asquith family was worried on two religious problems. She had read somewhere that there were four hundred million heathen Chinese, and she wondered why so little was being done about it. She was also worried about Hell. How could a kind Creator reasonably have invented such a place? So she asked a French priest who was visiting the family, "Do you believe in Hell?" "Certainly, my child," he said, "But I also believe that there is nobody in it."

Some of the saints have condemned people to Hell almost wholesale. St. Thomas Aquinas, who was the greatest theologian of them all, did not teach that Hell was unending, or that its punishments would last for ever. We know a lot less about the matter than St. Thomas Aquinas so we had better stop arguing the point.

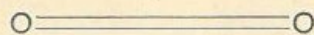
St. Teresa of Avila said that "she saw souls falling into Hell like leaves off the trees in Autumn," but she had a very hot Spanish religious imagination. She loved God utterly, and her fellow creatures in like measure. She had to endure much from the silken clad nobility of her time and the austerity of the life of Carmel must have been in violent contrast with it all.

We are often warned "not to

believe everything that a woman says," and this is one occasion when I prefer the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas. He was the saint who wrote the "Summa Contra Gentiles" a solid body of reasoned theology against the teachings of Islam. It saved European civilization for what it was worth.

Not even Judas who betrayed our Lord was condemned by Him; rebuked, yes; but not sent into the outer darkness. The church has always refused to say that Judas was beyond forgiveness and please remember that a kind word from the thief on the cross was enough to gain from the suffering Christ "Amen, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

May I say to you, men and women of the faith, how much higher you stand in God's eyes than the criminal who died on the cross beside the suffering Saviour. If you do not count in God's eyes, then tell me **who should?** We must not presume, but our baptism counts for much, our confirmation too, our frequent reception of the Sacraments and our daily, almost hourly, memory of God. Certainly there is no hour of the day, or waking hour of the night, when I can lose memory of how I stand before Him. Thy kingdom come!



DREAM CHARACTERS

I am talking about hospital again. When you are ill lying on your back and your lungs are just breathing, they give you something to help you go to sleep. You are in a world of your own. The only freedom I had

was to put my arms outside the covers and move them about a little. The room was warm, but somehow or another my shoulders felt cold.

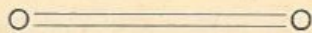
You create your own people when you are in that state. Maybe it is that

His hat was a couple of feet wide and curled up at the brim and it was embroidered all over, not just cheap embroidery but colourful and pains taking, yards and yards of it, each band separated by perhaps half an inch. So, too, his coat and trousers. He was the finest piece of embroidery I have ever seen, but of course I was creating him out of my imagination and nothing but the best would do so I certainly made him into a fine fellow. At the same time my shoulders felt cold and then he would stand up, come over to the bed and drape his sarape across my shoulders without saying a word; then somehow I would go to sleep and I would not see him again for another night.

How I came to invent him I hardly know. Maybe he was a lingering

Some characters created in the nightmare of dreams during an illness are not pleasant to remember. The old Mexican was nice. There were others who seemed to grow out of ugly ground but they come from the same factory of the imagination.

I remember lying in bed and looking at a great fat woman sitting in a high-back chair facing me, and it was on one of the dusty brown, sandy roads of Greece. A land of desolation. There she sat; this great big ugly woman in a high backed chair, knitting and knitting and knitting. I wasn't interested in what she was knitting, but I knew she was watching me to take me away if I fell asleep. There I was, and there was nothing I could do about it. Then I found a very ordinary hospital utensil near my hand. I had been fighting to be allowed two of them instead of one. It was on the table beside the bed, and I threw it at her. She burst just like a bubble; she grew smaller and thinner like a punctured football; and finally she stood up, and to my horror I found that it was the night nurse. She and I had not been getting on very well some twenty-four hours gone by, but when she came in next morning she smiled so beautifully that she banished the ghosts of the night, and all was well again. They say that "a soft word in the ear can produce a miracle in the mind." Anyway, bless her heart. It was still kind under her hard skin.



THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

After being in hospital I was sent to a nursing home for a months rest. It was a charming place, looking right over the sea, and the Nuns were kindness itself. In fact their care of me went beyond the limits of mere kindness. But I developed a carbuncle on my neck, the biggest carbuncle seen in North East Kent for quite a while. It felt to me as if my whole head was included in this new torture. They gave me some drugs to

As Sister looked down on me on the morning of my departure, she said, "You cannot go back to hospital that way you will have to have a shave. I will ring up a few barbers in the town and find out if they will send somebody." No, it was not

It is important for our peace of mind to get our values right, because if we don't we will begin to suffer from an inferiority complex. We will begin to think that we are failures, envious of the man next door because

he is richer than we are; because his car is a bigger one, and because we are losing our youth and becoming old and ugly. We do not want to grow old, our sensitivity is gone, even the food we eat doesn't taste like it used to. We go places, and we seem to have seen it all before. Our sense of curiosity has died. Maybe we have never really learned to read and consequently we have entered a desert of the mind. Unless we get our sense of values straight, we may take to the bottle.

Yet, if we do see things in the right perspective we should realise that what we call misfortune is not misfortune at all, and that disappointment is not the searing thing we imagine it to be, that even success is failure, because it does not bring with it lasting satisfaction. We have not lived long enough to have reached the age of philosophy.

The only reasonable explanation of existence is that our life is a process of education in which God gives us a chance of strengthening and ennobling our soul—with the help of the Sacraments and the love of God.

If life has not taught us to become resigned to the Will of God, if we have not learned to bend as a tree in the wind, if we have not learned to shelter our faces from the sleet and the rain, if we have not learned fortitude and submission, we have learned nothing at all. We are still as ignorant as the day we were born. We are still like little boys. We are putting too great a value upon life, because we think we have so much to do. When we are young we think we will live for ever, and then around middle age something happens and we know we have made an appointment with death. Not to-day, not to-morrow; there is no hurry; but there it is. When it comes will our friends gather round us fearful to let us know by word, or deed, or look, that the journey is nearly over? If so, we have learned no lesson at all. If our Christian belief, if our reliance on the

Grace of God has not taught us the final lesson of all, then our life is a failure.

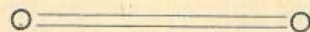
The final lesson is to learn how to die well. It can be said that all the teaching of Christianity is directed towards teaching men how to die well. Even the pagans knew how to do it with dignity and composure. Socrates the great Athenian philosopher died so nobly that some Christian writers thought that he had achieved baptism by desire.

In ancient Athens he was what we would call to-day a critic. He was not popular with the city council. They tried and condemned him and when they were ready they sent an Officer of the guard to him in prison to tell him that they were tired of seeing him around, and that he had better drop dead. After writing his defence he called his friends around him for dinner and having read the conclusion to his friends, he drank the hemlock and died. This is his goodbye.

"Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time has arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reasons, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently bless them."

With what a steely delicacy and tact the sense runs in that last sentence, flashing as steel should do, and how beautifully intelligent is the great close.

"The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better, God only knows."



St. Jude

St. Jude is well known as the saint of desperate cases.

At the last Supper, he addressed a pointed question to Our Lord and received from Him this wonderful reply: *"If anyone loves Me, he will*

keep My word and My Father will love him and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."

Thank St. Jude for asking that question! Better still, thank Our Lord for making that marvellous promise which He meant for each and every one of us. God richly blesses and rewards those who do His Holy Will.

Feast of Ss. Simon and Jude : October 28.

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THANKS

Grateful thanks to St. Philomena.

Mrs. Mary Mortimer.

Thanksgiving to The Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Dolours, St. Jude, St. Antony and St. Joseph for suitable employment for two members of the family.

N. Gaynor.

Thanks to St. Jude, Our Lady and The Sacred Heart.

Mrs. C. Browne, Claudy, Co. Derry.

Thanks to Fr. Titus Brandsma for favours received.

Mrs. E. Willoughby, Lancs.

Thanksgiving to Sacred Heart and St. Martha.

Mrs. E. Hogan, Liverpool.

Our Coming Novenas

THE LITTLE FLOWER

Sept. 25th — Oct. 3rd

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Sept. 29th — Oct. 7th

SAINT JUDE

Oct. 20th — Oct. 28th

On Growing Older

LORD, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older, and will some day be old.

Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details—give me wings to get to the point.

I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pains. Help me to endure them with patience.

But seal my lips on my own aches and pains—they are increasing and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint—some of them are so hard to live with—but a sour old woman is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all—but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

—A Mother Superior's Prayer.

OUR BURSES

	Already acknowledged			Increase		
				now		
The St. Jude Burse No. 2	...	£850	12 6		£960	13 6
Holy Child of Prague Burse	...	46	0 0		48	0 0
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse	...	20	10 0		24	10 0
Our Lady of Lourdes Burse	...	15	10 0		16	10 0
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	...	55	0 0		55	10 0
Little Flower Burse	...	21	17 6		23	0 0
Sacred Heart Burse	...	16	0 0		19	0 0
St. Anthony Burse	...	20	7 6		22	0 0
St. Joseph Burse	...	16	0 0		17	0 0
St. Kilian's Burse	...	9	0 0		10	0 0

Our Lady keep you!

Yours in Carmel

M. E. Lynch O.T.