

THE CARMELITE NEWS

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GOOD MOMENTS

A Happy New Year to you all—and may it be truly happy with a happiness you can share with others. It's important to share ourselves, especially our good moments. We help to lift up others who are burdened by worry or oppressed by grief or just made plain dull and dreary by the circumstances of their lives.

Have you never met people whose presence alone, without their saying or doing anything, made you feel better? Aren't they a great boon to us? I'm sure they must have their bad moments just like the rest of us but somehow they manage to ride them as a ship rides out a storm and sails on into calmer waters. The very fact that they manage to ride out their storms gives us some measure of courage to ride out ours; the awareness that they manage to reach calmer waters gives us hope that we shall reach them too. I think people like this are a gift from God, a part of His providence, to help us on our way. "Lift up your hearts", is the invitation to us before the Preface of the Mass—and such people help us to do just that.

So next time we hear those words at Mass perhaps we'll remember with gratitude the people who lift us up and we'll give thanks to God for them.

There is one question, though, that occurs to me. Shouldn't we be doing our share of lifting ourselves up, and lifting others too, and not leaving it all to those who have an outstanding gift for doing this? Surely we have our good moments too, when we can rise above our preoccupation with our own troubles and help to lift someone else out of theirs? Surely all of us can be instruments of God's providence in this respect—especially if we pray for the strength, the perception and the sensitivity to do it? I say "sensitivity" needs praying for because it sometimes happens that people with the best of intentions tread upon the corns of another's feelings with the hob-nail boots of their own do-gooding. Ouch! Lord preserve us from doing this — and from having it done to us!

So in 1979 let us try to bring more hope, more joy, into our own lives and share it with others.

LOG BOOK

You've heard of a ship's log, haven't you? (No, madam, it is not the wooden thing sticking up in the middle that they hang the sails on.) To be serious for a moment: it is the official diary of the ship's voyage in which events of importance are recorded each day.

Now it happened to be New Year's Day, and the good ship "Kerrygold" was sailing with a

cargo of good Welsh coal from Cardiff to Cahirciveen for the kipper curing factory there. The captain was a prim and proper martinet of an Englishman, while the first mate was a Scot—and proud of it. Well, it was the first mate's turn to take the watch, and on to the bridge came the captain to see that all was well. He noticed the first mate staggered a couple of times as he crossed from one side of the bridge to the other even though the sea was perfectly calm. You'll be remembering it was New Year's Day, and every Scot worthy of the name knows how to celebrate New Year's Eve.

The captain was shocked and angry and after telling-off the first mate in no uncertain terms he insisted that the first mate himself write in the ship's log: "First mate drunk". Just to rub it in. Nothing would budge him. So our Scottish friend duly entered those condemnatory words. When the captain checked the log that night, there it was in the first mate's own handwriting: "First mate drunk"—and underneath he'd written: "Captain sober"!

It's not so much what you say that counts, it's the way you say it!

BEDTIME STORY

Last time it was a train, this time it is a plane. Why does it always happen to me?

On the 13th of December—that's unlucky for a start—there was I in London Airport waiting for the plane for Rome to visit our students. We were due to take off at 5.30 in the evening, but at 5.30 precisely there was an announcement that the plane was delayed. Nothing else happened until 7.30

when they announced that the plane had been cancelled and we'd leave at 7.15 next morning. Consternation all round, as you can imagine. Then, ten minutes later, we were told that an Italian plane leaving late that night could take us so we all trooped off to it with a very nice Italian air hostess in the lead. And did she lead! I never met a woman who could run so fast while she was only walking. Next time I'll take my bike!

Anyway we landed in Rome about midnight and went to collect our baggage. (No, madam, I do not mean that Italian air hostess!) Eventually the bags came in, but not mine. I wasn't worried, unflappable, that's me, and I waited with

Don't Forget
Our Coming Novenas
OUR LADY OF LOURDES
February 11th—February 20th
ST. JOSEPH and ST. PATRICK
March 10th—March 19th
ST. JUDE
April 17th—April 25th

half a dozen others, sauntering round the baggage hall without a care in the world waiting for the next load of baggage to come in. It didn't.

It's a peculiar feeling, to say the least, standing in an almost deserted airport at one o'clock in the morning with only the clothes you stand up in, and the rest of your belongings, Christmas puddings and all, in Beirut perhaps, or Birmingham or Bombay or Ballydehob. I felt as if half of myself was missing. So much for that spirit of detachment from worldly

goods that I've been cultivating all these years! It's easy to be detached when you've got all you need, but when you haven't you find you're not as detached as you thought you were!

Anyhow we filled in marvellous forms about times of flights, shapes, sizes, colours of bags, value of contents, where were you in 1916, how old was your grandmother when she married and when did you last see your father. Somehow one felt it was worth losing the baggage so as to have the privilege of seeing such forms.

Then off to the main exit hoping to find a taxi, only to find instead two of the students with the college van patiently waiting for me at two in the morning. God bless 'em. Who dare say the younger generation are not as good as we were? Mind you, someone did say they wanted to make sure of the Christmas puddings, but I can't believe they're like that.

It was getting on for three o'clock when we finally arrived at the college and after a quick snack—I hadn't eaten for fourteen hours—went to bed. One of the lads was so thoughtful. He had left a pair of pyjamas on my bed, knowing that mine were lost. I was deeply touched. The only snag was that they wouldn't even go round my legs, let alone round my middle! I never realized before how extraordinarily slim he was. No matter, who needs pyjamas? I sat on the edge of the bed to take my shoes off, relieved to have arrived and wearing a beatific smile at the prospect of a few hours sleep, when—crash—down went the bed and me floundering in the wreckage!

It's the truth I tell you—cross me heart and hope to die.

I hardly dared to breathe let alone move for fear of bringing the rest of the bed that had managed to stay together down around me. Gingerly I picked myself up and surveyed the scene, torn between a crazy desire to laugh and a furious urge to throw the bed out of the window. In the end I did neither but found a nail-file in my coat pocket and unscrewed the bits that still hung together, stacked them against the wall, put the mattress on the floor—thank God that hadn't collapsed too—and went to sleep. You should have seen the Prior's face in the late morning when I told him he was one bed less!

There is no moral to this story—except, perhaps, that if you're the sort of person who combines losing baggage with breaking beds, make sure your nail-file is in your pocket not in your luggage. That's a tip the travel agents don't give you! They do say travel broadens the mind. I sometimes wonder.

THANK YOU

The next day I celebrated Mass together with the English speaking students for you all. They send you their thanks for your interest, your prayers, your support and assure you of a remembrance in their own prayers. They are all well and happy, thank God.

I went up to St. Peter's and prayed for you all and for all your loved ones, living and dead, at the altar of St. Jude.

Do you know, it rained practically every day I was in Rome except the last when it was like a

day in May. And where was I? Down under the earth in the catacombs!

A PLACE FOR YOU

*Let not your hearts be troubled;
believe in God, believe also in me.
In my Father's house are many
rooms;
if it were not so, would I have
told you
that I go to prepare a place for
you?
And when I go and prepare a
place for you,
I will come again and will take
you to myself,
that where I am you may be also.*

John 14:1-3

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

With all this bad weather about, snow, ice, freezing wind, burst pipes and so on it's hard to believe that Spring is just around the corner. It is though, and in some places the snowdrops and even the daffodils are poking their heads out. I bet they got a shock! Still they'll pick up again in Spring.

Life can be a bit like that with everything going nicely or reasonably so and then — bang — something gives us an unmerciful wallop and sets us back. This is when we need to remember the meaning of Easter. It is the Spring of Christ's Winter of suffering and death.

*The heart in springtime knows
there are no boundaries to the
working of the Spirit.*

When it seemed that all was lost then all came into joyful blossom and hope. So it is with us. If with Him we endure the Winter, then with Him we shall enjoy the Spring. This He has promised—and He is the Truth.

NOVENAS

So many people are sick at heart or in mind or body or soul, indeed perhaps all at the same time. They need our prayers. The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes reminds us of the healing power of prayer and of our duty to pray for those who are desperately in need of healing.

So many families are torn by discord or hurt, by lack of understanding and the bitterness that flows from it. The feast of St. Joseph reminds us to pray for them.

So much violence continues in Ireland despite the efforts of people of goodwill on both sides of the political divide. The feast of St. Patrick reminds us to pray for peace there—and to keep on praying until it comes. Some people say it will take a miracle. So be it. We'll pray for that miracle.

Perhaps you'll remember in your prayers to St. Patrick the men from our Irish Province who are working in Rhodesia. It is very difficult for them at present. They need your prayers not only for their safety but also that all they have built up for the benefit of the people there may not be destroyed. Please pray too for the black Rhodesian priests and sisters, who mean so much to the future of the Church there.

So often we pray when things are going badly—let's pray too when they go well.

Spring is coming. May the Lord bring you joy.

Until next time,

Our Lady keep you.

Edward Hughes