
The Carmelite News

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WHITEFRIARS — FAVERSHAM — KENT

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SURVIVORS

"Hello! Hello, there!" says the Summer. "Is there anybody there?" "Come on out of your igloos and see the sunshine and breathe in mouthfuls of air that won't turn your lungs into ice." And out we crawl, warily, only one slow step at a time, ready to rush back in. We've been caught before, thinking winter was over, only to find to our cost that it wasn't. But it is over—I think? On Easter Sunday I was in Aylesford, and the old stone buildings positively radiated the heat of the day even after the sun had gone down. Lovely feeling! No wonder the visitors said they could feel the winter aches and pains leaving them.

So let us all take a bow and salute each other — we, the survivors!

CONFIRMATION

As we approach the feast of Pentecost it's natural, I suppose, to think of Confirmation. Do you remember the special classes of preparation, and the Bishop talking about the importance of the sacrament and asking us questions to see if we understood? Sometimes the children answered, sometimes not. I suspect that whether they did or did not had less to do with knowledge than with awe. To be asked by a Bishop—and in public!

Well, this Bishop I'm going to tell you about (there's no stopping the man, so you might as well sit

back and relax) had a great way with children. He always managed to put them at their ease and get them to talk to him. He was also a very practical man and saw Christianity as a practical way of life, helping those in need being an essential element.

On one occasion at a Confirmation he asked a small boy, "What are the Corporal Works of Mercy?" "What do they mean in practise?" "Well," says the boy, "my mum says that in practise the corporal works of mercy boils down to providing food for the poor and drink for the clergy!"

Game, set and match to the small boy, I reckon!

*Peace is not a state but a process,
not just a matter of avoiding conflicts
but of keeping our conflicts
constructive.*

PENTECOST

Speaking of confirmation reminds me of Pentecost, the great feast which rounds off the Easter cycle of the Liturgy. Some people feel it is a neglected feast, with so much of the attention focussed on Christmas and Easter. I suppose they have a point. Pentecost was the lift off of the church, like a rocket going into orbit. The Holy Spirit was the power behind it as he came into the hearts of the disciples. We know with what results. They went out teaching all nations what

Christ had taught them, forming small communities of believers, and these acting like leaven in dough upon the society of their day.

Our understanding of Pentecost needs to be as full as possible if it is to achieve something in our lives and not just another feast on the liturgical calendar on the wall. I'd like you to consider just a couple of points.

MY PENTECOST

The first is that although Pentecost happened a long time ago it is renewed in each generation as each one of us receives the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation. There was a first Maundy Thursday historically centuries ago when Christ first gave himself in the Eucharist. There was also a first Pentecost historically centuries ago when the Spirit came down first upon the apostles. But in each case we are dealing with an event which was **to continue**, to be renewed in each generation of those who believe in Christ. Just as I receive the same Christ in the eucharist as did the Apostles, so in my Confirmation I receive the same Spirit as they did, and that same Spirit lives in me continuously as it did in them.

SAME WORLD

Again, in technical development, our world is so different from the first century A.D. that we may be tempted to think that people are different today from what they were then. That would be a mistake, I think. Men and women then needed love and truth to give a meaning to their lives and the strength to follow them faithfully. They needed to forgive and be forgiven. They needed warmth in the

winter not only for the body but for the heart too, perhaps even more. They needed light to see, and to see with the mind as well. And for all this they needed others—and Christ sent those others.

SAME ROLE

Yes, Christ sent those others, imbued with His Spirit — the apostles and their followers to bring love and truth, warmth and light, reconciliation and hope to the people of **their** world, of **their** generation. And just as surely we, imbued with the self same Spirit are to bring these things to the people of **our** world, of **our** generation.

The early Christians were, I suspect, no more perfect than we are and no less either. They were

OUR COMING NOVENAS—

June 2nd — June 10th
THE SACRED HEART

July 8th — July 16th
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

August 16th — August 24th
SAINT JUDE

people like us, young and old, married and single, rich and poor, well educated and poorly educated, the list could go on forever (God help us, so could he!). The point is, we are in the same position they were in with the same Spirit working in us as in them.

We aren't asked to be great preachers, great theologians or great anythings any more than they were. We are asked to let the Spirit of God guide our lives in our own circumstances with our own strengths and weaknesses with our own hopes and fears.

OPENNESS

So when Pentecost comes on the 3rd of June let's remember what it was about for **them** by all means but let's remember too what it is about for **me**, and pray for openness to the Spirit of God in my life, so that the Spirit will be able to work in me and through me.

A MORE POWERFUL FORCE

It is an ironic fact that in this nuclear age, when the horizon of human knowledge and human experience has passed far beyond any that any age has ever known, that we turn back at this time to the older source of wisdom and strength, to the words of the prophets and the saints, who tell us that faith is more powerful than doubt, that hope is more potent than despair, and that only through the love that is sometimes called charity can we conquer those forces within ourselves and throughout all the world that threaten the very existence of mankind.

—John F. Kennedy

PIPPED BY THE POST

That is us that is. Did you know that there's a Postal Strike in Ireland? Well there is, and there's no way we can get our letters to them—or theirs to us for that matter, unless we arrange for all of them to come over here. In that case we could get the people who took their places over there to forward their letters to them over here. "That fella has brains", as me mother said, "but don't let him use them!"

To be serious for a moment: do your best, please, for the

draw, because it looks as if our Irish friends in the Republic won't be able to help us support our 21 students for the Priesthood in Rome this year.

THE COLLAR STUD

A few years ago when I was being initiated into the mysteries of collar studs and cuff links—yes, I was human once!—not to mention dickie bows and ties, the first commandment which was rammed into one's mind, be it conscious, unconscious or subconscious, was:

"Thou shalt keep thy collar studs in the same safe place."

And the second was like unto the first: "And thou shalt love thy cuff links as thy collar studs."

These were the laws of sartorial orthodoxy, written on tablets of stone and revealed to the world on the heights of some Victorian Mount Sinai. One generation of boys after another came to maturity with a box for collar studs in one hand and a similar one for cufflinks in the other, and they were always put in the same drawer in the same corner of that drawer.

You may think this a bit far-fetched? But it isn't—wasn't. It was a law of survival.

Look at it this way. To go out and meet people one had to be dressed. One could not be dressed without collar studs. Therefore to go out and meet people one had to have collar studs. Simple, inescapable logic. And just as in a library a book misplaced is a book lost, so a collar stud misplaced was a collar stud lost. Therefore one always put it in the same place immediately one took off one's collar.

Now you might think that very straightforward. It was indeed in theory but not in practice. You have simply no idea how often a collar stud which had been put in the appropriate drawer in the appropriate corner actually moved from there under the mysterious influence of some unknown, intangible extra-sensory power. Some men, quite wrongly in my view, blamed wives and/or sisters for moving the blessed things when tidying up. "Tidying up", of course

THE ST. JUDE DRAW

If the strike ends soon the Draw will be postponed for a couple of weeks to allow our Irish friends to support it.

is another way of saying "re-arranging things", and when things are rearranged they are not where they were before. But no woman in her right mind would ever tidy up a collar stud box, would she? Well, would she? Well not any more than a man would forget to put the stud in the box—or the box in its proper place, in the first place, if you know what I mean.

I have a feeling that, whatever the records may say, there were more family rows, more fits of

apoplexy, more almost battered wives due to collar studs, not to mention cuff-links, than to any other single cause. And fitting them onto the collars and cuffs came a close second, but that's another horror story.

With the departure of the collar stud life has lost some of its challenge, some of its savour, some of its colourful variety.

But never mind. The car key has more than replaced the collar stud in the frustration stakes and a man can come close to murder or suicide when it gets mislaid.

I spent over an hour looking for mine and never found them, though I did find my spare set. And I haven't a wife to blame! I'll have to pray to St. Jude—to find my keys not to find me a wife.

Please remember us Carmelites, especially on July 16th, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and on the feast of Elias the Prophet, July 20th.

Have a lovely summer. May the sun shine on you, and you on all around you.

Until next time,

Our Lady keep you,

Edward Hughine Lane

THANKS

Thanksgiving to St. Jude and the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus: J.S., Chorley.—Thanksgiving to St. Theresa: E.P.H., Shepperton.—Thanksgiving to St. Jude: J.B. and V.H., S.W.17.—Thanksgiving to Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Jude, St. Anthony, St. Martin and Holy Souls: E.M., Cavey.—Thanksgiving to St. Jude, St. Joseph, St. John, St. Martin, St. Anthony, Our Lady and Sacred Heart; Holy Mass offered: E.McG. and M., Tipperary.—Thanksgiving to St. Jude, Sacred Heart, St. Martin and St. Gerard: Ms. J., Leeds.—Thanks to Our Lady of Lourdes: C.O'S., Merthyr T.—Thanks to Our Lady, Sacred Heart, St. Ann, Ven. Libermann and St. Jude: M.C., Kidderminster.—Thanks to St. Jude, St. Theresa, St. Anthony, Our Lady of Knock for happy Wedding Day: M.O'B., Monaghan.—Thanks to Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Jude, St. Joseph and St. Patrick: M. L'H., Antrim.—Thanks to St. Jude: M.F.McM., Erith.—Thanks to Sacred Heart through the Saints, Our Lady of the Rosary, St. Joseph, The Little Flower, St. Jude and the Child of Prague: C.N., Kilkenny.—Thanks to Ss. Martha, Jude, Joseph, Theresa, Patrick, The Blessed Virgin, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Lourdes: R.K., Down.—Thanks to Ss. Jude, Anthony, Martin, Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, St. Joseph and St. Joseph of Cupertino and Holy Souls: A.C., Salford.—Thanks to St. Jude and St. Martin and Our Lady of Loreto: R.C., Fintown.