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The Carmelite News

WHITEFRIARS — FAVERSHAM — KENT

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GOLDEN OCTOBER

It's a beautiful day at the end of October as I write to you, or to be more precise, it's an evening at the end of a beautiful October day. You know what I mean: a glowing, golden sky streaked by purple and bronze clouds, and all the leaves like mirrors throwing the light from one to the other, each a shade different from its neighbour: a thousand shades of golden green and russet brown. I wish I could paint it and keep it on the wall in front of me to lift my heart on the dull day that creeps up on us all now and again.

EMOTION RECOLLECTED IN TRANQUILITY

It's a very useful thing to have pictures of lovely scenes to brighten our hearts when they are low; to calm them when they are afraid or angry; to ease them when the bitterness of life sticks in the throat, as it sometimes can; to comfort them when hurt or loneliness or depression break down our defences.

I suppose that's why there is such a variety of posters to hang on the wall nowadays—scenes from nature mostly which create a mood, evoke a response, tap the wells of our own experience — of a sunset, of the sweep of autumn leaves under the sun, of the transparent hazy veil of the willow in the first bright spring day, of the

swirl and splash and gurgle of a stream in the summer shade. And the people who shared these lovely moments—thank God for them for they lit up our lives, and some still do. We need to make time for the beautiful, happy memories to rise and dissipate the clouds like the October sun broke through and banished the mist this morning. Here's to the memories, the happy ones, the good ones. Why shouldn't we enjoy them and make them a part of our prayers?

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Prayers and memories go together like fish and chips, cabbage and bacon, sausage and mash. Here's what we'll do in Advent. We'll think of the people and things, events and places that we've enjoyed, that have been good for us, made us laugh, helped us to open ourselves to others and share ourselves with them. And for anything that was perhaps not quite right we'll be sorry and say so and leave it at that and get on with the business of thanking God for what is and has been good in our lives. To say "Thank you" and feel gratitude is often the best way of praying — far better than indulging in vain regrets and sorrow and making this the main line of our approach to God. An attitude of thanksgiving is looking at God's love: an attitude of continually expressing sorrow is looking at my

own shortcomings. For goodness sake let's not wallow in them but rather look at the good in our lives and thank God for being so good to us: "Thanks for the memory".

*God gave us memory so that
we could recall His generosity
to us. St. Catherine of Siena*

TRACKED DOWN

It must be terrible to be a criminal, and I'm not talking about morals. Just the plain, simple fact of knowing you're guilty and jumping when a policeman says "Excuse me, sir . . .". Seems nerve wracking to me. I'd never make a decent criminal, I'm afraid. Let me tell you.

Last August I went for my holidays to Ireland and spent a few days in that lovely old town of Kinsale with its fine harbour ringed by low hills. There I was stood on the quay looking at the dozens of boats tied up to their jetties and buoys — away from it all — well, looking at the boats and thinking it was time for lunch and just turning to go when, "Hello", said a voice behind me. Now you may think that's quite normal, and it is, so it must be me whose not. Anyway why should I think the "Hello" was for me with a score or more people nearby? So I pressed on. "Hello", said the voice, "isn't that the Father from Hazlewood?" I knew it! Caught red-handed doing nothing wrong, but caught just the same!

Lo and behold, not above a couple of minutes later I see two friends from London just arrived by boat that very morning.

A couple of days later three of us went for a walk to the Old Head

of Kinsale (the Lusitania was sunk off the coast there) miles from anywhere. It was a lovely evening for a walk and we were stepping out briskly when — yes, you're quick you are — "Fancy meeting you here", said a voice, as a family we knew from Cheltenham came into sight.

They say if you stand on O'Connell Bridge in Dublin you'll be bound to see somebody you know, but Kinsale beats it hands down so far as I'm concerned.

*The British soldier can stand up
to anything — except the British
War Office. George Bernard Shaw*

THE PUNT

You know what a punt is I'm sure and you'll be expecting some fishing story or half smiling at the prospect of me falling into the water. Well, you're right and then again, you're wrong.

A punt is an oblong flat thing that keeps you floating but the one I'm talking about is a bit leaky at the seams and I'm getting wet feet. It's the Irish Punt that's leaking my friends. Do you know that the Irish Punt was worth only 75p in English money last week? A 25% drop in our income from you generous Irish supporters.

NEW MEMBERS

Now I *can't* ask you for more and I'm *not* asking you for more, because in all conscience you are doing marvellously already, but —and it all comes after the 'but'— do you think you could possibly get someone new to take the newsletter and so increase our support? Times are getting even more difficult, I know, with bills going up

for you and income going down. So, if you can persuade, blackmail, bully, bulldoze, cajole a friend into taking the letter and joining our circle of prayer and support, I'll give you an easy penance next time you come to confession!

Meantime, whether you manage to trap someone or not, a sincere "Thank you" for your kindness and prayers and support throughout this first year of the eighties. No, dear, I know it's not the first year of *your* eighties and no, I'm *not* confusing you with Clarence!

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

is not a loveless keeping of the commandments but a giving of oneself, weaknesses and all.

St. Ambrose

THREE FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

The book of the prophet Isaiah is an intriguing composition. It is without doubt the most extraordinary pointer to the coming of the Messiah and to the manner of man he would be and to the way he would live and die and to the nature of the everlasting kingdom he would establish. "What an inspired writer he was", you might say. "What a vision he had and a wonderful gift for expressing it."

Yes, indeed. But you know its even more extraordinary than appears at first sight. For one man to have such a gift is a cause for praise and thanks to God, who gave it to him. In this instance God gave the gift not just to one man but to three different men at three different times, and as the years rolled by their writings came to be lumped together into one book, and it was named after the first.

As we listen to the readings on the Sundays of Advent we are listening to the prophets who above all others prepared men's and women's minds and hearts for the "One who was to come".

THE HEART HAS ITS EARS

Did you ever find yourself just listening to the scriptures being read as if you were a million miles away? Or with your mind so full of care you could not take in what was being read? Or just too plain tired or ill to take it in. Or too lazy?

You may not have experienced this — no? really? Well if you haven't you've never been human! Come in and sit down and join the rest of us — especially me and my sort who are too lazy!

This listening needs to be of the heart. It needs to be aware that there is a message in the reading. Not just any old message but a message for me personally about myself and what is good for me, a message of encouragement and support. Above all we need to remember that the message comes from someone who loves us, from someone who cares about us, from someone who spoke the message centuries ago but spoke it for *me*. And not just for me but for all who are touched in their lives by me, because once I hear with the ears of my own heart I too become a messenger to others. It doesn't

OUR COMING NOVENAS—

December 16th - December 24th
ST. JUDE

December 25th - January 2nd
THE DIVINE INFANT OF
PRAGUE

—
THE HOLY FAMILY

matter how old or young I am, how learned or ignorant. All that matters is that I take the message into my own heart. If I do that my own heart will speak the message in a thousand small ways through me without me having to utter a word of my own about it. I — the way I think, the way I act, the way I am — will speak the message God has spoken to my heart.

So together we'll ask God every day of Advent to help us to listen to his message with the ears of our hearts; to help us to understand it; to help us to see what it is saying to us personally in the concrete circumstances of our lives. And

gradually, with all our limitations and faults we shall each in his or her own small way become the message.

This could be our own way of giving ourselves to the Christ of Christmas, who gave himself to us. Can we give a greater gift than ourselves? He couldn't.

Let us open our hearts to God this Christmas and to those whom God has drawn into our lives, and to those of them whom we find difficult in one way or another let us extend a greater measure of tolerance and compassion than we would if left just to ourselves.

A WISH

*A glad New Year to all!—
Since many a tear,
Do what we can, must fall,
The greater need to wish a glad
New Year.*

*Since lovely youth is brief,
O girl and boy,
And no one can escape a share
of grief,
I wish you joy;*

*Since hate is with us still,
I wish men love;
I wish since hovering hawks still
strike to kill,
The coming of the dove;*

*And since the ghouls of terror
and despair
Are still abroad,
I wish the world once more within
the care
Of those who have seen God.*

Eleanor Farjeon

Once again I'll be going to Rome to celebrate Christmas and New Year with our students. You will be in our thoughts especially on Christmas Day when we'll be celebrating Christ's Mass together for you all.

May the God of love be with you and all you love this Christmas and bring you happiness in the New Year.

Our Lady keep you

Edward Hughes

THANKS

Thanksgiving to Our Blessed Lady and St. Jude for favours received.—R.M.O'S., Birmingham.

Very grateful thanks to The Sacred Heart, St. Jude and St. Anthony for favours received.—M.N.

Thanksgiving to St. Anthony for favour received.—M.M., Neasden.

My thanksgivings to the Sacred Heart through the Blessed Mother of God, St. Martin and St. Jude.—M.McG., Cavan.

Grateful thanks to Our Lady and St. Jude for answer to prayers.—I.B., Scotland.

Thanksgiving for many favours received, through Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady, St. Ann, St. Jude and Our Lady of Mount Carmel.—J.McL.

Most sincere thanks for many favours received.—M.M.W., Kilkenny.

In gratitude to Our Lady and all the Saints, especially St. Jude for favours received.—G.B., Staffs.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude for many favours received.—M.L., Offaly.