

THE CARMELITE NEWS

WHITEFRIARS — FAVERSHAM — KENT

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

Hello there, once again! It seems ages since I last talked to you, yet in fact it was only a few weeks ago. I hope you've missed me. It's nice to be missed isn't it? — as the deserter said when he stood before the firing squad!

Anyway it **is** nice to be back with you again and to wish you a Happy New Year. It's never too late to wish happiness, and every day is the start of a new year measured from then. May you, each and all, have your share of happiness, in small ways and in big ways, to warm your hearts and from your own warmth to warm the hearts of others.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

A warm heart is like a brazier. I remember the old night watchman whose job it was to keep an eye on large roadworks. Can you remember him too? He used to sit in a narrow pointed box like a sentry box with a hard wooden slat across it for a seat, a couple of old blankets folded on it for a cushion, and a couple of old blankets and an old overcoat three sizes too big wrapped around him to keep out the cold of the night.

THE BRAZIER

But you couldn't see any of this at first. All you could see was a small point of light in the distance, not twinkling like a star but glowing steadily. As you approached,

you could pick out other flickering points of red, where the lamps burned. But it was the red glow growing nearer and clearer with each step, that held the eye and the mind: a brazier full of glowing coals. As you stood by it you were roasted on one side and frozen on the other, but we boys never turned to get our backs warm. No, we were too fascinated, hypnotized you could say, by that mass of redly glowing fire that had a life of its own and radiated its own living warmth to us and to the shadowy figure hunched in the box seen in uneven shifting shadows across the brazier.

The watchman was glad of a bit of company and kept us enthralled by his stories of far away places and strange and heroic things. My night watchmen seem to have been old soldiers or sailors. It didn't matter a jot whether their yarns were truth embroidered a little or outright make-believe; they were marvellous entertainment.

TEA FOR TWO —OR THREE

And if there was just one or at most two standing and staring into the brazier, the watchman might give you a sip of his tea, strong, scalding hot and sweet out of his very own tin cup that fitted so snugly on his tin pint pot — broad at the bottom and narrow at the top (no dear, I am **not** referring to you nor to Aunt Jemima — though

it's true come to think of it!) Why is it that no tea ever made tasted as good as that tea?

The brazier, its red glow beckoning and warming up the night gave us all such pleasure and lifted our spirits. Thank God for the people whose warm heartedness is the brazier that lifts up our spirits and warms our own hearts.

NOT GETTING THE BIRD

—ONE

Do you know how to make the Christmas Turkey last longer? I hope Mrs. Thatcher is reading this! Well, you just leave it in the freezer until it's too late to have it ready for the Christmas Dinner! Could anything be more simple? And if you don't think it could happen — well, you should hear the hilarious account of "How we didn't have our Turkey on Christmas Day" from my nieces and nephews. Their mother forgot to take the Turkey

THANKS

Heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, St. Anne and St. Jude for tremendous favour. — P.F., Clydebank.

With grateful thanks to St. Jude for favours granted. — E.S., Boyle.

Grateful thanks to Our Lady and St. Jude for answer to prayers. — M.H., Burnley.

Great thanksgiving to St. Jude, St. Anthony, St. Martin, Our Blessed Lady and the Sacred Heart for favours granted in 1980. — B.M., Ballygawley.

Heartfelt thanks and in gratitude to Our Blessed Lord and Our Lady of Lourdes, and most of all Blessed Edith Stein for obtaining employment. — P.K., Swansea.

Grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart, St. Jude, St. Joseph, Our Lady and St. Martin for recovery after serious operation. — R.D., Canterbury.

Thanksgiving to Our Lady, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Joseph, the Little Flower, St. Jude and St. Anthony, and Father Pio for favours received. — M.K.K., Longford.

Most sincere thanks for intercession of Sister Benedicta — employment obtained after so much disappointment. — G.J.H., Hounslow.

Thanksgiving to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Martin, Padre Pio, and Fr. Charles for favours received. — D.O'M.

Grateful thanks to God and to St. Jude and St. Joseph. — O.G., Ontario.

out of the freezer with all the goings on, so no turkey time!

NOT GETTING THE BIRD

—TWO

The man who used to write this newsletter before me — no names, please — is very partial to roast duck. He relishes it, fat, bones, beak, carcass, feathers and all — a horrible sight! Still, there's no accounting for taste. Now he was at home shortly after Christmas and his sister, thinking to give him a treat and a surprise — she said nothing to him — popped a duck into the oven when he was out for his morning stroll. She killed it first, of course, because otherwise the R.S.P.C.A. might have been a little put-out.

Some time later, before our friend returned for his lunch, other relatives arrived unexpectedly. No problem: plenty of cold meats. So at lunch everyone tucked into a nice plate of cold meat and spuds and cabbage and plenty of tea to wash it down, and after the usual chit about this and chat about that the visitors waved goodbye and off they went.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

A couple of hours later the sister smelled — yes, you've got it first time! She opened the oven and there was the remains of the duck — well done, if ever there was anything well done, and the oven . . . I leave you to imagine the oven. Oh, the joys of home cooking!

LETTERS — ENVELOPES

— THANKS

I meant to thank all of you who write and say how much you enjoy our newsletter chat and a bit of a smile, but the last letter was too

full and it got squeezed out. Also, I want to thank those of you who enclose an addressed envelope (no stamps from Ireland, of course). You have no idea how this helps us, especially saving time for the ladies who help here in the office. It makes our replying to you so much easier and quicker too. And it saves us the cost of an envelope each time, which is a real donation. So thank you once again for your practical help.

CYNICAL CAYING

A good listener is one who can give you his full attention without hearing a word you say.

PUERI CANTORES

That's Latin for "boy singers" but it's not as simple as that. Is anything? It was at one time, but now it is the title of youth choirs composed of boys and girls from all over the world.

A couple of days before I returned from Rome I walked up the great avenue that leads up to St. Peter's and was surprised at the number of buses — big tourist buses — parked along both sides and also near the square in front at St. Peter's. It was dusk, and the great church was silhouetted against the clear, cloudless evening sky. I forgot the buses and walked easily along the path, my eyes full of the gentle beauty of the evening.

Then as I went up the steps I heard it. The incredible beauty of thousands, yes thousands, of youthful voices singing inside St. Peter's. I went in, completely absorbed by the music, which grew and grew and filled the whole place: sopranos and altos, tenors and basso profundos. It was out of this world. No manufactured

instrument was there, just the sheer perfection of the human voice, each one blending with the other, now loud, now soft, but totally engulfing all that space in a river, a waterfall, a tidal wave of beautiful sound. So beautiful that it hurt. It was good to be there.

And the place was packed with young people singing their hearts out and enjoying every minute of it. Oh, how I wished you could have been there and shared the beauty and the joy of it. So I found a corner and prayed for you all.

CROSSGAR — MAYO — BALLINTEER

As I walked down the steps into the piazza thousands of youngsters streamed round me making for their groups, each advertising itself by a notice stuck on top of a pole. Ahead of me were some figures gowned like midget cistercian monks. They must be French with that style, I said to myself, and in my best French I asked them where they came from. "What's he saying?" said one girl to another in a Northern Ireland accent! They were from Crossgar, I'm sure of that, and I **think** they said it was in the County Down.

Then ahead of me again sitting on the pavement playing an accordion was a man who could come from only one country — and he did. A lovely lad from Mayo waiting for his group. "We're from all over the world," he said, "including

OUR COMING NOVENAS—

February 11th — February 20th

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

March 10th — March 19th

ST. JOSEPH and ST. PATRICK

April 24th — May 2nd

ST. JUDE

Japan and South America." He said there were ten thousand of them and I believe him.

I walked on looking at the buses, some of which had their home towns displayed — Spanish, Italian, German, French, but no English, Scottish or Welsh.

Then I saw a bus with Ballinteer on it but not a soul in sight. I waited for a while but no one came, so I left and went back to our College. The ball is over but the melody lingers on.

STUDENTS

It took me five days to get to Rome because of transport problems caused by the Air Traffic Controllers' strike in Italy. But get there I did complete with Christmas Cake and Christmas Pudding. We had a nice Christmas and I saw the New Year in with them — eating hot Christmas Pudding and scalding custard! Indigestion, here we come!

They are well and happy, and we all celebrated Mass for you on Christmas Day. They send you their thanks, their good wishes and assurance of their prayers, in which I most sincerely join. I also remembered you all at the altar of St. Jude in St. Peter's.

IF WINTER COMES CAN SPRING BE FAR BEHIND?

In the grounds of Wardley Hall, north west of Manchester, the rhododendrons are in full bud and in the gardens of Colwyn Bay the snowdrops and primroses are laughing in full bloom. The New Life of Spring is already moving.

If we are open to the Spirit of God in simple prayer and gentle service then the New Life of Easter will be ours. There's our Lent: simple prayer and gentle service.

I thought some of you might like to make a Novena to St. Patrick by saying the prayer called his breastplate. May there be true peace in Ireland.

ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE

*I bind unto myself today
The strong name of the Trinity:
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three.*

*I bind this day to me for ever,
By power of faith, Christ's incarnation,
His baptism in the Jordan River,
His death on the Cross for my
salvation.*

*His bursting from the spiced tomb,
His riding up the heavenly way,
His coming at the day of doom
I bind unto myself today!*

*I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead;
His eye to watch, his might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need;
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward;
The Word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard!*

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

*I bind unto myself the name,
The strong name of the Trinity:
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three;
Of whom all nature hath creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word;
Praise to the Lord of my salvation—
Salvation is of Christ the Lord!*

Amen.

God love you and give you joy
this springtime.

Until we meet again,

Our Lady keep you

Edward Hughes