

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Winter edition of the "Review." It is that time of year again when we prepare to roll out the old and ring in the new. We are all feeling the pinch and with it feelings of anxiety about the future due to our present economic situation. However those of us who have lived through World War II and the more recent troubles here in Northern Ireland have learned not to let ourselves get too depressed as we have been through it all before and managed to survive.

A friend of mine has a little flat stone and on it is written the words- This too will pass - When the stone is turned over we find the same words written in the back. It's a reminder to us to thank God when times are good for us and to seek his help when times are bad. With a wee bit of faith and hope, God will grant us the inner strength we need to see us through these difficult times too.

They say what goes around comes around and in my own case this has happened with me being appointed Director of the St. Peregrine Centre once again. I had this job back in the '80's and 90's before coming to Benburb. I thank Fr. Tim Flynn, our last director, for the wonderful services that he and his helpers continue to provide at the Servite Oratory at Rathfarnham, Dublin. I look forward to assisting him and our other friars involved in our St. Peregrine Ministry throughout the Province of the Isles, in whatever way I can.

I thank you all for your prayers and support during the past year. Be assured of our prayers for you and your family and we wish you all a peaceful Christmas and many blessings in 2011

Fr. Sean O.S.M. Editor.

The Christmas Envelope

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past ten years or so. It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it-overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma - the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else. Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I wanted something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way. .

Our son Kevin, who was twelve that year, was wrestling at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a nonleague match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. The youngsters on this team, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and spanking new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, the light helmets designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. But as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly. "I wish just one of them could have

won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids-all kids-and he knew them well, having coached little league football, baseball, and lacrosse.

That's when the idea for his present came. That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed an envelope on the tree, with a note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas I followed the tradition, one year sending a group of retarded youngsters to a hockey game, another year a cheque to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground a week before Christmas, and on and on.

The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was so wrapped up in grief that I barely put the tree up.

But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition had grown, and someday it will expand even further, as our grandchildren stand around the tree, wide-eyed with anticipation, watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

CHRISTMAS JOY

Christmas joy comes gently, Like snowflakes on a lawn,
Like tenderness to minds of care, Like time's slow marching on.
It's the lovely innocence in a child's face;

Sweets on the table waiting

For Santa Claus on his reindeer race Round a world of expectations.

It's the glow and glitter of the local town Where we go to buy and bring;

It's a happy tiredness, from the rush to get Those little friendship things.

It's the canine care in a dog's bark, Through the night alert, and watching Till the bright dawn pursues the dark, And has the fear of night retreating.

It's a few days off from the working place, From the humdrum clamour turning;

It's a sweet thought on the road to home,

To that big red candle burning.

It's a prayer that wings around the sky, It's hope on the world descending;

An ageless gift from a Baby Boy,

Eternal, never ending. .

Paddy Meegan.

“DO YOU LOVE ME”

Visiting the crib at Christmas is a very special part of the beauty of the feast, which parents and children make a family occasion. Jesus' life began in that little stable, surrounded by the warmth of the living animals, the scent of hay and the gentle touch of his mother.

He came into a life of the senses, a life of joy and pain. He walked the dusty roads, drank sweet wine at weddings and laughed and grieved with his friends. He left us an example of a life overflowing with love, hope and compassion, a life brutally ended by those who did not accept this message.

Through it all God sustained him and in the words of St Ignatius, 'Jesus did it all for you and me'. Ignatius tells us to taste with love that heavenly plan, that holy family, to taste Jesus' life. For in that life exists all our lives, the essence and vitality of both body and spirit.

Ours is an incarnate faith. The blessings and sorrows of body and soul fill our lives as we enter January. If you have any doubts about the God of love and forgiveness, reflect on the qualities of the friend who was the rock upon which Jesus built his church.

Peter loved and trusted Jesus, but there were times when he didn't understand his mission, even denied him three times - to be welcomed back with the words: 'Do you love me?' What a lesson in forgiveness and self-acceptance. Having visited the Holy Family at the crib, with renewed faith, hope and love, say from your heart to Jesus in the New Year: 'You know I love you'.

Jill Sheehan.

Beatitudes

Blessed are the patient - they will get things done and done well.
Blessed are the faithful - they will be like safe anchors in a world of broken moorings.

Blessed are the honest - they will be to society what leaven is to bread.

Blessed are the humble - they will find rest for their souls.

Blessed are the generous - they will keep alive our faith in the essential goodness of people.

Blessed are the caring - they will shine out like beacons in a world darkened by indifference.

Blessed are the genuine - they will glow like gems in a world of falseness.

Blessed are those who do not give up hope - they will see their dreams come true.



From the cowardice that dare not face new truth, from the laziness that is contented with half truth, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, Good Lord, deliver us.

- Kenyan Prayer

At the end of the Road

Something strange and beautiful happens to people when they come to the end of the road. All fear, all horror disappears. I have often watched a look of happy wonder dawn in their eyes when they realised this was true. It is all part of the goodness of nature and, I believe, of the inimitable goodness of God.

An Experienced Nurse.

The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order were men dedicated to a vision - that the world could be a better place if people had hope in God. Today, Servite priests & brothers & sisters & nuns, and lay people make hope real by compassionate service to others.

Why not join us?

Consider being a Servite Priest, Brother or Sister

The catechist

The catechist asked her Religious Education class to draw pictures of their favourite Bible stories. She was puzzled by one boy's picture, which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent.

"The flight to Egypt," he said.

"I see," said the catechist. "And that must be Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh, that's PUNCHES the Pilot!"

MASSES IN HONOUR OF ST. PEREGRINE

SERVITE ORATORY - ST. PEREGRINE CENTRE

At Rathfarnham Shopping Centre, Dublin, Special Mass for the Sick every Wednesday at 4.30 p.m. followed by Novena Prayers and Blessing with Relic. Counselling Service available Monday through Saturday. Phone (01) 4936300.

FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7.30pm:

- St. Mary of the Servants Church, Blakestown, Dublin 15. Tel: 01-8210 874.

FIRST AND THIRD MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 8pm:

- Servite Priory, Benburb, Co Tyrone. Tel. Benburb (028) 3754 8241.

FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7.30pm:

- St Mary's Church, Greencastle, Shore Road, Belfast.

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, 10.00am:

- Divine Word Parish, Marley Grange, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16. Tel. 01-4944 295.

LAST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 6.30pm:

- St Mary's Priory, 264 Fulham Road, London SW 10 9EL. Tel. (+44) 20-7352-6965.

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, 11am:

- Servite Priory, Bury New Road, Kersal, Salford, Lancs. M7 OWP. Tel. (+44)161-792-2152.

LAST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, 10am:

- Servite Priory, Kingsway East, Dundee, Scotland DD4 BAA. Tel. (+44) 1382-500-446.



A book of petitions is open at each Priory to record the names of our sick brothers and sisters. We offer those names to the Lord at our Masses and Healing Services for the Sick.

OUR THANKS TO YOU

St. Peregrine Centre depends on the generosity of our friends and supporters in order to provide our services to the sick. We ask for your continuing help in the light of the additional expenditure in maintaining the Oratory and the development of the ministry at Benburb, Blakestown, Marley, London, Kersal and Dundee. All donations, wills, bequests and offers of help through fund-raising will be most welcome.

MAILING LIST

For future issues of the "REVIEW" send this coupon to: Fr. Sean, O.S.M., Editor, St. Peregrine Publications, Servite Priory, Benburb, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland BT71 7JZ

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