

# ST. MARY'S, LEYLAND

## Update

Issue No. 78



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## CHRISTMAS 2011

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Wishing You Peace and Joy for Christmas 2011

Fr Jonathan  
Fr Paul  
Sr. Veronica



God's Blessing on You and Your Loved Ones in the New Year

'Update' Magazine - Published by St. Mary's Church, Leyland ~  
Telephone 01772 ~ 455955

**Editorial:** How truly ‘magical’ the Christmas Story really is – that and the immense pleasure and happiness it can bring! I am not discussing shopping, presents, food, drink – and all the hype. In sincerity, I have in mind the true meaning; it’s almost like going back to a child’s innocent belief in the gifts brought by Father Christmas – a pleasure never to be forgotten, or replicated – and all because of the greatest gift ever made. God gave his Son to humanity, for the salvation of the human race. All this is here in the pages of this issue, with several references to Christmas and what it truly means – but not to the total exclusion of non-seasonal topics – the latter bringing interest to ‘Update’s’ pages because of the different and diverse nature of their writings. The sisters of different congregations are notable because of their plurality of mention, and we record two important anniversary milestones, one to a nonagenarian, and the other – congratulations on 150 years’ service to the missions, by our Parish friends, the Sisters of the RNDM. God’s angels lend their aid – in different ways – from Advent to Christmas and beyond – and those of our community, perhaps disadvantaged by need, ill-health, etc. receive a sympathetic and deserved place, as appropriate. I commend the issue to all. Grateful thanks are due – and duly recorded – to all involved; in this I include writing, formatting, printing, collating and delivering – well done to one and all. Thank you, and God bless – a Very Happy Christmas and New Year to all.

**The Editor**

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**THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS FRUITCAKE**

Here's the recipe (as best as I can remember it.... it's a little fuzzy!):

**Ingredients:**

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 cup of water        | 1 teaspoon baking soda |
| 1 cup of sugar        | 1 teaspoon of salt     |
| 4 large eggs          | 1 cup of brown sugar   |
| 2 cups of dried fruit | lemon juice, nuts      |
| 1 bottle of whisky    |                        |

**Directions:**

Sample the whisky to check for quality. Take a large bowl. Check the whisky again. To be sure it is the highest quality, pour one level cup and drink. Repeat. Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of sugar and beat again. Make sure the whisky is still okay. Cry another tup. Turn off the mixer. Break two leggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit. Mix on the turner. If the fried druit gets stuck in the beaterers, pry it loose with a drewscraver. Sample the whisky to check for tonsistency. Next, sift two cups of salt. Or something. Who cares? Check the whisky. Now sift the lemon juice and strain the nuts. Add one table. Spoon. Of sugar or something. Whatever you can find. Grease the oven. Turn the cake tin to 350 degrees. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out of the window, check the whisky again and go to bed.....**Anon.**

**FATHER JONATHAN’S INTRODUCTION:**

*“Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat  
Please to put a penny in the old man's hat;  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't got a ha'penny then God bless you!”*

**T**he old nursery rhyme has a good point. If we simply remember Jesus at Christmas time, then, truly, we are missing the point. He is to be born again in so many ways and, above all, in our love for those in need. Luckily, all human beings are in need, and so we have plenty of scope. If we have no money to share with those in need, we can always pray for others.

On the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple, St. Augustine of Hippo is the author of the Second Reading, at the Office of Readings. *“Brothers (and sisters), listen very closely: you are members of Christ’s body and you are the body of Christ. And this is how you are what he said: ‘Here are my mother and my brothers and sisters.’ But he goes on: ‘Whoever hears and whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother’.*

As a man who has lived his life mainly in male company, I discovered only later in life, the strength of the relationship between mother and child. I had no idea that a mother might be more bereft, if she saw harm done to her child, than harm done to her husband; strange (to me) but true. I had no means to suspect that a mother would be so protective of her child, as all good mothers are; in fact, I now comprehend the depth of feeling – the struggle for a mother to become detached from her child, as she has to let go and allow the young one to spread his, or her wings, and ‘fly’ from home.

All Christians are called to become ‘Mothers of Christ’ according to Jesus. Isn’t that an amazing thought? We can be the ‘generators’ of Christ. How? Firstly, in ourselves, by letting Christ form in us, as the ‘Old Man of Sin’ dies; by our giving-of-self, and by our dying-to-self. Secondly, as Christ is formed in us, by our union with God’s will, in joy and peace, people might see our union with God by our behaviour, and thence by God’s grace, LOVE might be born also in others.

If we simply remember Jesus at Christmas time, truly, we are missing the point. He is to be born again in so many ways, and above all in our love, especially for those in need. Luckily – in this regard – all human beings are in need! So we have plenty of scope.

**Sincere best wishes, for a very Happy Christmas and New Year to all.  
EMMANUEL - "MAY GOD BE WITH US"**

*(Readings’ extracts in Fr. Theo’s article are all taken from Year ‘A’)*

Before the beginning of August, I went to buy some birthday cards but I found that nearly every card on display was all about celebrating Christmas; needless to say, not one of them was about the Nativity. After making a bit of a fuss, I found that the birthday cards had been put away to give space to Christmas cards! My insistence won the day, and the girl kindly produced the birthday cards from a drawer. That is only one small example of the problems we have in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in recognising that Jesus' Birthday is such an important event, that the Church has given us four weeks of Advent, to make sure we have time to prepare for that great day.

I have always thought that 'birthdays' were very important days – the only day which is special to each one of us – and that is why I try to send cards to the people who are special in my life, though it tends to get a bit 'out of hand', when I try to keep up with the birthdays of the pupils in the school.

**Advent is a season of expectation.** It is a time of waiting and preparing for the coming of our Lord, as if he had not already come, some two thousand years ago.

For the **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**, St. Paul tells us to: *“Stay awake, the time has come, our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted,”* and John the Baptist is our guide in the **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**: he warns us: *“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.”* (Matthew: 3, 1-4).

We have to prepare for the coming of our Lord, into our lives, by prayer and penance, so that by Christmas, we may hope to be more committed to his service, and understand, more fully, how he wants us to live. It is very sad that so much about Christmas, in our society, is about enjoying material things, whereas our Lord longs to give us gifts of grace, that include a stronger faith in the truth that God became man and dwelt amongst us, a better understanding of his great love for each one of us, and the joy and peace that this can bring. Essentially, this is what we are celebrating, first and foremost, and then we are invited to enjoy the material things as well!

During Advent, we are preparing to welcome the 'Light of the World', into the darkness of some aspects of our life – into aspects that include violence, marriage breakdown, and lack of faith, injustice, homelessness, and so on. The Advent liturgies are full of hope, looking forward to the coming of God into our world. As Christians, we should encourage each other to hope, knowing that Our Lord has promised to be with us, and knowing that he always keeps his promises.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday** is 'Rejoicing' Sunday or 'Laetare' Sunday as it used to be called, and on this day, we celebrate with joy the fact that we are so near to the Feast of Jesus' Birthday; hence the rose coloured vestments at Mass – a sign of joy!

On the **4<sup>th</sup> and last Sunday of Advent**, we hear an account of Mary's return to Joseph, after three months of staying with her cousin Elizabeth; she was obviously pregnant. Joseph shocked – and no wonder – so much so, that he decided to divorce her, informally, until in a dream, all was explained by an angel, who said: *“Joseph son of David do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.”* When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do; he took his wife to his home.' In the Prayer for this Sunday, we hear how, even in our joy, we must be prepared to follow our Lord, not only in the joy of his coming, but also in his sufferings and death:

*“Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through his suffering and death to the glory of the resurrection, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”*

**Father Theo**

#### THE DIETER'S PRAYER

Bless my bathroom scales, Lord,  
Each week as I step on  
Help me lose a stone or two,  
And not put any on.

Help me enjoy my salad  
And foods to make me slim,  
Keep me on the low-fat track  
So one day I'll be thin.



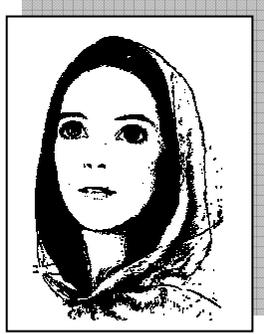
(Author unknown –  
from Kathryn Bolton)

**“We are each of us angels with only one wing,  
to fly we need only embrace each other.”**  
(Author Unknown)

**“Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils.”**  
(Hector Berlioz)

#### VOCATION STORY: LIVING AT THE SCHOOL OF MARY

(By Sr. Milagros Gregorio, F.M.A. – the following is a précis of the inspiring story of a Filipino Catholic nun whose devotion to Mary sustained her throughout her vocation.)



### Early Remembrances of Mary:

Two abiding memories of Our Lady remain with me from my childhood. The first concerns the Wednesday novena prayers I attended with my mother at Baclaran, and the second was the annual Mayflower offering at St. Joseph's Church, Canlubang. Both events were to foreshadow God's beautiful plan for my life – with principal regard to my vocation, which began at Canlubang. I was baptised Milagros – a name inspired by Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal; her feast is on 27 November, the day after my birthday. At first I did not attach any importance to my name – I did not like it as a little girl – and it was only later that I came to realise that it had a special significance, embodying my life's project, and call to the religious life.

### The Lord Calls:

Having attended religious retreats in Canlubang, for three years from 1973, I became aware of the need to make a decision. I was then studying medicine, and was happy in my life, but there was something missing. Where was my priority in life? Having learned of the apparitions of Mary to St. Catherine Labouré, and the significance of my Christian name, I decided to make a novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. In this, I asked for signs from God in the form of a white or red rose, but no sign came. Instead, I received an inspiration on my birthday, in which Jesus told me he was calling me to belong to him, entirely, in the religious life, together with the gift of a rosary, and, in relation to the latter, Jesus said to me: *"This rosary, a gift you have received today, is the sign I give you. It stands for Mary, my Mother and your Mother. You bear her name. She will be with you always as Mother and Guide. Entrust yourself totally to her."* At this, I felt a deep peace and joy within, and it was then I made my choice. Then and always, I desired to be something beautiful for God.

### More of Mary:

I was sent to Rome in 1984 to study the spirituality of the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians. With one week to go before my perpetual profession, I was

asked to change course and take Mariology at the Marianum, Rome, and I remember becoming confused at these changes in direction. However, I remembered that my life was consecrated to our Blessed Mother, and determined to put all my trust in her. As I did so, I recalled the gift of the rosary as a sign of my vocation, and Mary's presence in my life.

Some years later, in 2002, I was with a group of students meeting Pope John Paul II, in his private chapel at the Vatican. Each of us had the chance to greet the Pope, and I remember becoming attentive to whatever message I may receive from God, through him, and the song we sang: *"Abba, Father"*. That was my first message; the second came in the form a rosary given to each of us by the Pope.

### Lessons in Suffering:

A year later, on 11 February 2003, I was admitted to Gemelli Hospital for surgery in the treatment of my cancer. This changed my life radically. To be sick with cancer puts us in touch with our frailty and mortality as human beings. I then became more aware of the reality of death. In the peak of health, these things are pushed to the back of our minds. We don't take them seriously – not then – as there are more important things to do, and we live life as if it is ours forever! During my 4-year bout with cancer, I have learned some important lessons. My sickness helped me to focus on essentials and not on appearances. With the first lesson came the awareness that my sickness is a blessing, though it seems absurd to say it. However, I now know this to be true, having looked inwardly at myself – at my relationship with God and with others.

My second operation, followed by chemotherapy in the Philippines (March 2005 to 2006), brought me to experience strongly the so called 'dark night' of the spirit. It was my 'humbling' experience, one that brought me 'down to earth', showing me my own radical poverty and nothingness. Despite all the help and care from the sisters, family and friends, I felt alone and useless. The devastating and debilitating effects of the chemotherapy, more than ever, gave me the need for affection and recognition. Everybody was busy, moving about, doing something, and the constant coming and going, in the communities where I stayed, left me feeling more alone and useless.

It took time before I could pass through this 'dark tunnel'. I was aware that many loved ones were praying for me. Then, however, I felt my faith was only in my head and my will-power was not enough. I was consumed with so much anxiety, fear and helplessness. I needed God's grace to flow through my whole being, to bring me that peace sufficient to accept God's will for me. I felt like a 'paralytic' waiting to be touched by the Divine Healer. In time, the miracle of my interior transformation took place – not in a spectacular way – but slowly and silently. It happened as I grew, trustfully, to abandon myself to God's will. It has now been a year since I came back to Rome, and, notwithstanding another

session of chemotherapy for lymphoma, a 'limping' right leg, caused by the viral attack of 'herpes zoster,' the dark tunnel has gone, and I am alive! I can smile, I can walk, I can talk, and I can thank God for His love and goodness.

There have been lessons to be learned from being sick. Life is a gift, given and received with love, meant to be lived in the present – with love – not holding on to the past, and without worrying about the future; it is not in my hands. This is actually the reality of God, for He has no past and no future. HE IS! I have learned to put my faith and trust in God, and today, sick or healthy, I can be a channel of God's love, and embrace everyone with God's merciful embrace.

### At the School of Mary

*"To be a Christian, one has to be a Marian,"* Pope Paul VI stated. This strong statement needs to be understood; it cannot be otherwise, for the roots of our Christian faith point to Mary as the woman who gave birth to the Son of God, and the 'WORD BECAME FLESH'. Mary is Jesus' Mother, and our Mother too, part of God's divine plan for the salvation of humanity. Mary accepted God's invitation when she said: *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word,"* and became an essential part of that plan.

St. Don Bosco, at nine years old, received in a dream his mission to become father and teacher of the young. In his dream, it was Jesus who gave Mary to him as his 'teacher': *"I will give you a teacher without whom all wisdom is foolishness."* The educative intervention of Mary is rooted in her divine motherhood. Mary is a teacher because she is a mother, and mothers cannot but be teachers. Every Salesian vocation is led and guided by Mary in her school – no academy here, with formal lessons – but Mary's school of real life. The lessons are not easy, for here one must die to self and let Jesus in – a mirror reflecting what Mary did. In difficult times, I could hear her whispers in my ear: *"Fear not, the Lord is with you."* Sometimes I would ask how this can be possible, and then Mary assured me: *"The Holy Spirit will overshadow you. Trust! Nothing is impossible with God!"*

In everything, Mary reminds me: *"Do whatever Jesus tells you"*. For this reason, I have come to know how important it is to educate myself, to listen and discern the Word of Jesus, in daily life, through constant contact with the Word of God in the Scriptures: studied and celebrated in the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, contemplated in daily meditation and in the Rosary. In Mary's school, I grow daily in understanding the significance of our charism, expressed in Italian as the *'amore preveniente di Dio'* (the *'all-embracing love of God'*).

God is love; He takes the initiative, the first step to loving us. He loves us all throughout with that 'all-embracing love,' the 'be-all' and 'end-all' of life. And, to help us understand all this, Mary is ever our Mother and Teacher. What Don Bosco told our first Sisters is true, even today: *"Our Lady is here. She is in your*

*midst. She loves you very much. Trust in her and you will see what miracles are."*

<http://www.all-about-the-virgin-mary.com/vocation-story-sister-mila.html>

### IF GOD SHOULD GO ON STRIKE

How good it is that God above has never gone on strike  
Because He was not treated fair in things He didn't like.  
If only once He'd sat down, and said "That's it, I'm through,  
I've had enough of those on earth, so this is what I'll do -  
I'll give my orders to the sun - Cut off the heat supply;  
And to the moon, Give no more light, And run the oceans dry."  
Then just to make things really tough, and put the pressure on,  
"Turn off the vital oxygen till every breath is gone."  
You know, He would be justified, if fairness was the game.  
For no-one has been more abused or met with more disdain  
Than God, and yet He carries on, supplying you and me  
With all the favours of His grace, and everything for free!  
Men say they want a better deal, and so 'on strike' they go;  
But what a deal we've given God to Whom all things we owe;  
We don't care who we hurt or harm to gain the things WE like,

**BUT - WHAT A MESS WE'D ALL BE IN  
IF GOD SHOULD GO ON STRIKE.**

*(from Maureen Morris – found on a visit  
to the White Church at St. Anne's on Sea)*

### BELT UP! ... ..

Jim asked his friend, Tony, whether he had bought his wife anything for Christmas. 'Yes,' came the answer from Tony who was a bit of a chauvinist, 'I've bought her a belt and a bag.' 'That was very kind of you,' Jim added, 'I hope she appreciated the thought.' Tony smiled as he replied, 'So do I, and hopefully the vacuum cleaner will work better now.'

### NINETY YEARS YOUNG!

*"Our span is seventy years or eighty for those who are strong." (Ps. 89/90)*

Thus the psalmist says, but he says nothing about the 'misfortune' of reaching the age of 90! That is rather odd, when you consider that the vast majority of famous people in the Old Testament – Abraham, Jacob, Moses and many others – ran into their hundreds, beaten only by Isaac, who reached the age of 180. In my youth, it

was unusual for people to reach 80, but now, it is quite common. I suspect this is due to the fact that there are so many more ways of keeping people alive, and it may well be that, in the future, more people will reach the giddy heights of 90, or perhaps even 100!

The psalm goes on to say:

*“... All our days pass away in your anger.  
And most of these are emptiness and pain.  
They pass swiftly and we are gone ....*

*.... Make us know the shortness of our life  
that we may gain wisdom of heart.*

*.... In the morning, fill us with your love.  
We shall exult and rejoice all our days.”*

This is a perfectly lovely psalm, full of hope and joy and, of course, these feelings underlie the reason for celebrating each other's birthdays with so much care and love.

On the other hand, we send cards to each other for Christmas, though as time goes on, it becomes more and more difficult. I get many cards but often they give no address or surname, and seldom a legible postmark! It is very nice to get Christmas cards – often the only communication we have with so many people – but birthdays are quite different; they come from people who are our real friends, and who care about us, and the older we get, the more cards we receive!

Going back to the ‘beginning’, I began my monastic career at Ampleforth Abbey, in September 1940, at the age of 19 – straight from School – and was solemnly professed in September 1944; my ordination to the Priesthood came later, on 20 July 1947. My school career was undistinguished – to say the least – which meant I started the studies for the priesthood three or four years earlier than my contemporaries, who were sent to Oxford – later to Fribourg for their studies.

After my Ordination, I worked in the School, as School Clerk for the Headmaster. Whilst there, I had a lot of contact with the pupils, and was able to listen to their problems, and was able to *‘be there’* for them.

In 1951, I was sent to work in our Parish of St. Peter's, Seel Street, Liverpool, and though at first I found it very hard to leave the monastery, I soon came to enjoy working and living with the people of Liverpool, renowned world-wide for their friendship and lively sense of humour. Apart from a few isolated week-ends spent in the local parishes that are served from the Abbey, the monks had no specific training for working on our parishes.

On one occasion, a mother asked me to take her nine-year old son, David, to Lourdes; he had a severe heart and lung condition. I asked his Doctor, (Dr.

Coakley), what he would advise; he said; *“Do you realise he could die on the journey, with the change of temperature?”* I then asked him, if this had been his son, then what would he decide, and he said: *“I would take him.”* In fact, we did go on the Liverpool Pilgrimage. David did everything, including a reluctant plunge into the ice-cold baths, which ought to have killed him! Shortly after our return, I was moved to Leyland, and, apart from Christmas cards, lost touch with him; however, he is now happily married, and lives with his family in Runcorn.

In 1957, I was moved to St. Mary's, Leyland, and was there for 26 years, and apart from the work in the Parish, I acted as Chaplain to St. Mary's High School. During my time in Leyland, I went to Lourdes many times, as Chaplain to a Group of the HCPT. We had a first-class leader and hand-picked helpers – mostly pupils from St. Mary's High School. One of the ‘handicapped’ boys christened me, ‘The Idiot Prayer Man’!

One of my fond memories concerns ‘old’ Abbot Herbert. It was when I realised that he was not about to be re-elected as Fr. Abbot, I went up to his room to tell him. Years later, he told me that he had no ideas what the Community Chapter would decide, and that if I hadn't told him the news, he would never have been able to make the speech of welcome to the new Abbot – none other than Father Basil. After his speech, he said to the new Abbot: *“Your first task is to decide what to do with me!”*

Abbot Herbert actually came to help out in the Leyland Parish, and worked there until his death. He was a great example to us all, in his prayer life, first and foremost, and by his incredible energy in visiting people in their homes – the sick and elderly, but also many others, including those with no faith, and those who no longer practised it. One of his many activities was to organise a ‘house prayer-group’. After his death, the wife of that family asked me if it was true, that he was distressed that she never became a Catholic. I told her that I felt sure he had never even thought about that, but that he may have said that he felt sad when saying Mass in her house, as he was not able to give her Holy Communion.

In 1983, I was sent as Parish Priest, to Knaresborough, North Yorkshire. It was a complete change from my previous two parish experiences. To begin with, it covered a very large area, and I would have been lost without a reliable car. Knaresborough is a typical market town; the people were very willing to become involved in the work of the Parish. From a handful of Eucharistic ministers, I increased them considerably, as there were many house-bound parishioners, some of them quite a distance from the centre of the Parish. I was fortunate enough to have as my Secretary, Mrs Heidi Schofield, who acted as house-keeper as well as Secretary; without her valiant work, my life as Parish Priest would have very different, and far less efficient.

At the beginning of November 1998, the Abbot sent me here, to St. Austin's Grassendale, South Liverpool – a thriving Parish with three other priests – and

returning then to Liverpool, felt a bit like 'coming home'; after all, it was, perhaps, fitting that I should end up where I began!

**"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time."**

*(T.S. Eliot – 'Little Gidding V')*

**Father Theo**

On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011, Father Theodore Young O.S.B., achieved the status of a nonagenarian – 90 years **YOUNG!** Well known to Parishioners of St. Mary's, he was a much loved and very well-respected assistant priest of this Parish for more than 25 years, and we were sorry to lose him, when Father Abbott asked him to become Parish Priest at Knaresborough, N. Yorks, in 1983. In celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, we send him our heartfelt congratulations best wishes and prayers – not forgetting our sincere thanks. Well done, Father, and God bless!



### **A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS GREETING**

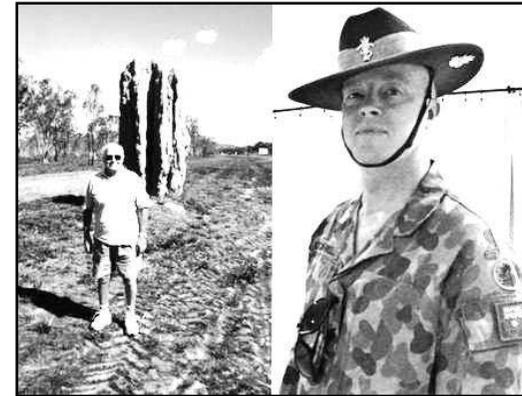
As always our thoughts and prayers are especially with the sick, the housebound, the lonely, families that are apart and all those whose circumstances may make Christmas a difficult time.

Somehow, may the spirit and love of the Christmas Season come to you and bring you joy and peace, with every blessing and hope for the New Year.

### **MY AUSTRALIAN VISIT – JULY / AUGUST 2011**

*(by Jimmy O'Carroll, St. Mary's Parishioner, regularly to be seen at the 6.00 pm Mass on a Saturday evening)*

**M**y son, James, having completed 22 years' service in the British Army as MWO1 (ASM) in the REME, applied for, and was accepted into the Australian Army in 2008, and is presently based in Darwin, in the north of the country. Having been invited to spend a holiday there with James and his family, I departed from London, via Singapore, to Darwin. The journey, despite the huge distance was very pleasant. I was met at Darwin Airport by James and his wife, Lisa.



The family home in Darwin, having a swimming pool, barbie area, a garden and four bedrooms, has air conditioning as a 'must have' as temperatures reach 32 to 40 degrees during the daytime. James spent most mornings at the barracks. During the afternoons, we visited tourist areas around Darwin, including the Crocodile Marina in the City centre. One of the highlights was a trip down the Adelaide River, feeding the really large crocodiles. Regular evenings were spent in Darwin, visiting the excellent restaurants, especially those overlooking Darwin Bay; watching the sun go down was very special. One of the strange things that I did notice was that many people were on the beach, but no one was in the water. I was told that this is due to the large numbers of crocodiles, sharks and very large jelly-fish that are found in the sea. September is the start of the 'wet' season. It is not, I am told, the best time to visit northern Australia. I really enjoyed my visit to see my son and his family again. Hopefully, I will visit again in 2012.

**Best regards to all Kingsmen, wherever you may be.**

**Jimmy O'Carroll (Ex. 1 KINGS)**



## EDUCATION, IN LEYLAND, FIFTY YEARS AGO (PART II)

*(Concluding the Two-Part Saga of Leyland School-life of Half-a-Century Ago)*

One of the restraints to a child's education is absenteeism through illness, holiday or truancy. The first we cannot control, the second we can resist and the third we can try to limit. Children are not the only ones subject to illness; teachers are vulnerable due to close contact with children. When a teacher was absent in the 1960's, there were few, if any, supply teachers available – neither were there any classroom assistants. At St. Mary's, we overcame the difficulty of sick teachers by combining classes or splitting a class. Often Gerry Dunne would take a class for R.E. and Mathematics, and then, after the morning break, the class would be spread out.

However, in the case of long-term absence by a teacher, a supply teacher would be provided. This occurred when Mrs Addy left on maternity grounds and was replaced by Nancy Chapman.

As 1962 dawned, the intensity of the 11+ preparation increased. For many parents, Junior 4 (the present Year 6), was regarded as the most important year of their child's time in primary education. I always felt that this was unfair, and unfounded, because the most important part of a child's education is continuity, and I used to remind parents that the most important year, is the year they are presently in. Only a select few could pass the 11+ and move onto Grammar School, yet all children were subjected to the ordeal. The 11+ could only be a guide, as to the progress as child had made, by passing tests in language, mathematics and intelligence, at a certain point in time. Children develop at different rates, and have other talents that were not brought out by the 11+ system.

Further pressure on pupils and teachers was added, when it was announced that the school would be subjected to a general inspection by H.M.I. Schemes of work were reviewed, revisited and re-written, in all subjects of the curriculum. For a newly qualified teacher, having inspectors sitting in on lessons was daunting, but we all came through unscathed. During the next 35 years, I never experienced a further general inspection.

As Whitsun approached, plans were well in advance for a school camp in the Isle of Man, for Years 3 and 4 (now Years 5 and 6). There was one problem regarding staffing; five male members were prepared to supervise the children, but no female member would give a firm commitment, which obviously put the whole trip in jeopardy. Eventually, Marie Waring volunteered, provided another female could be found. Gerry Dunne persuaded Margery Robinson, who was in charge of the Nursery – which is still occupying part of the Golden Hill site – to fulfil this role.

Mr Coffey had introduced parents' nights, when teachers reported to parents on their children's progress. This was continued by Mr Dunne, but when children are present, and working at their lessons, (the afternoon session was substituted by an evening session), it was not easy to talk to parents, and supervise the class at the same time. It was unpopular with staff and, fortunately, it was abandoned shortly afterwards. I was once asked by a parent if I got paid overtime for working in the evening. The answer was 'no', and attendance was part of our contract.

As the summer holiday approached, it became apparent there would be changes for the following year. Mrs Addy would not be returning and Mrs Chapman would be leaving, as was Stella Taylor, who was taking maternity leave. There would be two vacancies to fill. Reorganisation of classes and classrooms would also take place. The Nursery was transferring to Haig Avenue and plans were afoot to dismantle the huts. I would have to pack all my equipment and books, and move to the New Building block.

During the Summer Holiday, I, along with Gerry Dunne, George Gore, Bernard Warren and Mick Gillett, and volunteers from the Parish, demolished the huts, levelled the ground, took down the outside toilets and wall separating the lower playgrounds, and built a flight of steps to link the upper and lower playgrounds.

**Edward Almond**

### *Addendum: What happened to the staff?*

1. *Gerry Dunne continued as Head until taking retirement when the Golden Hill site vacated with an amalgamation of the Infant and Junior Schools, in 1986. He did not have a long retirement, dying in 1989.*
2. *Winnie Livesey became Head of St. Anne's in 1967, and remained there until retiring in 1976. She died in 1985.*
3. *George Gore became Deputy Head in 1967, and was appointed to the headship of St. Mary's, Euxton, in 1969. He is now retired and living in Penwortham.*
4. *Dorothy Ratcliffe became Head of St. Bernadette's Primary, in Shevington, where she remained until her retirement. She died in 2002.*
5. *Bernard Warren left to become Head of St. Michael and St. John's, in Clitheroe, where he remained until retirement. He now lives in the Clitheroe area.*
6. *Joe O'Connor left to become a Deputy Head. Later he was appointed Head of Sacred Heart in Chorley – now retired and living in Bishpam.*
7. *Joan Walsh left in 1974 to work in Secondary Education – now retired and living in Fulwood.*
8. *Lelia Addy resumed teaching at St. Mary's, Chorley. Now retired, she lives in Euxton.*
9. *Stella Taylor (later, Holden) resumed teaching at St. Anne's, Leyland,*

from where she retired. She died in 2008.

10. Mick Gillett left to attend University in 1963, and went into Secondary Education. He is now retired and living in Penwortham.
11. Pat Lever (Andrews) left in 1963, on marrying, and moved to the South of England where she continued teaching. She is now retired and living in Rochester.
12. Anne Derham (Riley) left on maternity grounds, and moved to St. Anne's where she also taught. She died in 2008.
13. Marie Waring married Edward Almond in 1968 and left on maternity grounds in 1971. She later worked part-time at St. Gerard's, Lostock Hall. Now retired, she lives in Leyland.
14. Edward Almond left in 1978 to become Head of St. Mary's, Chipping, from where he retired in 1997, and then worked as a Religious Inspector in the Salford Diocese.

### ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – THE INITIATOR OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB



**By Fr. Steve  
Rodrigues**  
(per an email to  
Lesley Raven)

One of our most treasured Christmas traditions is displaying the Nativity, or Christmas Crib, during the holy season. It is a joyful remembrance

of the occurrences surrounding, and leading up to the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In the year 1223, in an Italian town called Greccio, it was St. Francis of Assisi who popularized the devotion to the Christmas Crib, that brings so much joy to both young and old. Since then it has been a familiar sight in Christian homes all over the world.

To understand the special events that occurred at Greccio, we must first remember that St. Francis had a very special love, and tender devotion for the Christ Child. The Christmas feast was a time of great emotion for him. Francis viewed the celebration, as a privilege, and spoke of Christmas as a feast of gentleness, humility, generosity and above all poverty. It is said that the Saint's heart 'melted with love' at the thought of the Lord of Lords being born, as a little child, in a poor stable. It is safe to assume that this devotion was 'born' during his prolonged pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where a visit to Bethlehem increased these sentiments, in his already loving heart.

In December 1223, St. Francis was returning from a visit to Rome. On his way home to Assisi, he stayed with some of his Franciscan brothers in the Sabine Mountains. In this same area, lived a generous and very spiritual man, named John Vellita, who held Francis and the brothers in the very highest regard. In fact, John Vellita had given Francis, and his followers, a rocky piece of ground planted with trees, which was just on the outskirts of the town of Greccio.

When John Vellita came to visit Francis and his brothers, he was presented with an unusual request. Francis wished to celebrate the Holy Night of Christmas by replicating the original scene at Bethlehem. The plan was to use a nearby cave, and set up a manger filled with straw. Then, Vellita was to bring in an ox and a donkey, just like at Bethlehem. Francis expressed a desire to celebrate the coming of the Son of God, upon earth, in a fitting way, and to see with his own eyes how poor and miserable the One who was born for love of us, chose to enter this world. John Vellita eagerly put Francis' plan into action. He enlisted the aid of the brothers, and together, they gathered the materials and assembled the holy scene.

When the people of the town, and the surrounding region, heard what was going on, they gathered together and, with torches lit against the dark, made their way up the hillside toward the cave. A table had been prepared above the Manger, so that Mass could be celebrated. Beneath the simple and improvised altar, lay the figure of the infant Jesus, surrounded by the ox and donkey. At midnight, the Mass was celebrated, commemorating the birth of our Saviour. Francis preached at this Mass, and his words were tender and loving. The people in attendance were spellbound by his words, and the tears of humility and joy that coursed down his cheeks. Francis then picked up the Christ Child figure and, to the amazement of the crowd, the Infant appeared to come to life, smiled at Francis and caressed his cheeks.

Through his words and the power of his love, Saint Francis had seemingly brought to life the Child God, so that all present could share in the gift of His love. According to Brother Celano, Saint Francis' biographer, the Saint "*sighed deeply, and seemed to be brimming over with wonderful joy.*" The place of the 'Miracle at Greccio' was consecrated to the Lord and became a Church. Above the actual cave, or grotto, an altar was placed in honour of Saint Francis. Today, Greccio is still a popular place of pilgrimage and, during the Christmas season, it is a scene of great devotion. The Christmas crèche, first initiated and popularized on that day, has since become an effective international reminder at Christmastide that Jesus' arms still stretch out for our love. Let Jesus be born in our hearts! Merry Christmas.

**"One of the weaknesses of our age is the apparent inability to distinguish our needs from our greeds." (Don Robinson)**

**BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS  
(August - November 2010)**

**Welcomed into the Family of the Church by Baptism:**

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Emily Rose Knight              | 07.08.11 |
| Abigail Isla Simpson           | 07.08.11 |
| Elisha Mary-Jane Lowe          | 13.08.11 |
| James Anthony Prescott         | 28.08.11 |
| Anna Grace Cheetham            | 04.09.11 |
| Lexi Marlene Gabriella Dunn    | 04.09.11 |
| Annie Joyce Harling            | 11.09.11 |
| Harry Nicholas Marquis         | 25.09.11 |
| Noah James Dineen Bowen        | 25.09.11 |
| Blake Benjamin Holland         | 02.10.11 |
| Oliver Michael Hoban           | 09.10.11 |
| Olivia Mae Eastwood            | 09.10.11 |
| Jessica Guise                  | 16.10.11 |
| Jacob William Guise            | 16.10.11 |
| James Andrew Guise-Savigar     | 16.10.11 |
| Nerrissa Anne Courtney Wright  | 23.10.11 |
| Liam Giles Michael Verity      | 23.10.11 |
| Kyan Rhys Longworth            | 30.10.11 |
| Tiffany Maureen Ann McFarlane  | 30.10.11 |
| Jonathan Joseph Dennis Tinsley | 06.11.11 |
| Sophie Elizabeth Lomax         | 06.11.11 |
| Jake John Farrimond            | 20.11.11 |

**Those Joined in Holy Matrimony:**

|                                                       |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Liam Robert McGladrigan and Francesca Jane Noblet     | 13.08.11 |
| Steven Edward Allcock and Louise Anne Marie King      | 14.08.11 |
| Peter David Adams and Cara Maria Keane                | 21.08.11 |
| Robert John Clifford and Anna Charlotte Turner        | 03.09.11 |
| James Christopher Turnbull and Rebecca Suzanne Davies | 24.09.11 |

**Those Who Have Died + May They Rest In Peace + :**

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Rita Fairbrother             | 08.08.11 |
| Thomas Peter Parkinson       | 23.08.11 |
| Richard Craven               | 23.08.11 |
| Emily Teresa Glover          | 07.09.11 |
| Ida Swann                    | 09.09.11 |
| John Francis Kelly           | 10.09.11 |
| Martin Kevill                | 19.09.11 |
| Baby Jermaine Joseph Sampson | 30.09.11 |

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Helen Smalley     | 07.10.11 |
| Hazel Mary Carney | 15.10.11 |
| Paul Denis Walker | 15.10.11 |
| Michael Taylor    | 10.11.11 |

+++ We Pray For All Whose Names Appear On These Pages +++

*We remember also, those who have died, not of our parish, but connected with us as relatives and friends of parishioners. May they rest in peace. Our sympathy goes out to all the bereaved.*

**THE WORLD IS MINE!**

Today upon a bus I saw, a lovely girl with golden hair;  
I envied her ... she seemed so gay ... and wished I were as fair.  
When suddenly she rose to leave, I saw her hobble down the aisle;  
She had one foot and wore a crutch, but as she passed a smile.

**Oh God, forgive me when I whine; I have two feet ... the world is mine!**

And then I stopped to buy some sweets.  
The lad who served them had such charm, I talked with him.  
He said to me: "It's nice to talk to folks like you.  
You see," he said, "I'm blind."

**Oh God, forgive me when I whine; I have two eyes ... the world is mine!**

Then, walking down the street, I saw a child with eyes of blue.  
He stood and watched the others play; It seemed he knew not what to do.  
I stopped for a moment, then I said, "Why don't you join the others dear?"  
He looked ahead without a word, and then I knew he could not hear.

**Oh God, forgive me when I whine; I have two ears ... the world is mine!**

With feet to take me where I'd go,  
With eyes to see the sunset's glow,  
With ears to hear what I would know,

**Oh God, forgive me when I whine; I'm blessed indeed! The world is mine!**

*(Author unknown – kindly sent in my Kate Jordan)*



## THE SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS



### 150 Year Celebration of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions

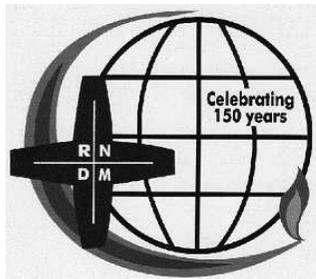
#### *God of our Past and Shepherd of our Future*

walk with us throughout the days, weeks and months of this year. Let our memories of former times be warm and our hopes fulfilled knowing that across the world we will be remembered in a Circle of Prayer. United by your Spirit, may we together cherish the work and mission of Your Servant,

#### *Euphrasie Barbier.*

No matter how little or how much we have been part of her life — through You, we are one family of friends. Lord, bless this year with success, new discoveries strengthened in faith as we

#### *Treasure our Past and Shape our Future. Amen*



**Christmas Day 2011**

Thank you for supporting our Mission and work throughout the world:

#### **The Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, Pacific**

Join with us now as we celebrate the work of Euphrasie Barbier and we ask that you continue to pray for our sisters around the world and for the Beatification of this woman with a heart for mission. Visit our websites:  
[www.mdm.org](http://www.mdm.org) or [fundraiser@mdmgen.org](mailto:fundraiser@mdmgen.org)

## MY FRIEND, 'JIMMY'



I would like to introduce you to my friend, 'Jimmy', though that is not his real name. I have given him the name just for the purposes of this article – but in doing so, I mean no disrespect – in fact just the opposite, as I regard him as, perhaps, the closest friend I have ever had. He has been close to me now for many years, close in fact, since the day I was born, I believe, though I cannot remember those early days. In all that time, 'Jimmy' has been 'there for me', helping me through 'thick and thin', through the bad times and the good, always a friend in need and with never a wrong word – not from him – though I think, in my case, I may have led him a merry dance at times. 'Jimmy' has been my 'shadow', one might say, almost my stalker, though I use that term in a good sense, for he has followed my footsteps in sunshine, and rain, uphill and down dale, in bad times and good. And yet, like the best of stalkers, I have never been able to take a good look at him – I know he is with me, somehow, but, try as I may, he always evades my visual discovery, just like the best of detectives trained in surveillance techniques ... .. because, you see ... .. 'Jimmy' is my guardian angel.

As I said just a little while ago, I think that at times I have led him a merry dance, for there must have many occasions when the paths I have taken in life have been leading anywhere but to God, and many of them, I am sure were not safe paths to travel – in the purely physical sense. I am sure that, from both points of view, spiritual and temporal, there must have been times when I was walking into danger and did not realise the perils I was facing. At times like this, I am quite sure that 'Jimmy' was on hand to hold on to me – guarding me, protecting me – holding my life in his hands – keeping me from real damage to body and soul. And for all that, for all those years of faithful service, I owe him my most sincere thanks. Believe me when I say I have cause to hold great faith in 'Jimmy's' protection and guidance. I cannot prove that he is there at my side – twenty-four, seven – as they say, but to me he is as real as the members of my family, except closer! I believe that 'Jimmy' was commissioned by God, to look after me and guide me all the days of my life, but again all of this through faith alone.

I am not alone in holding on to these beliefs. It seems that the ancient Greeks had similar faith in a spirit sent by God to watch over an individual. Greek philosophy – in particular Plato alluded to this belief – and this faith in an angel appointed by God to watch over and guard us, seems to follow all down the ages of history – through the Old and New Testaments – right to the present day. There is ample evidence of this in Judaism, in the Eastern Orthodox Church, in

Islam and especially in the many references to be found in the Gospels of the New Testament.

The guardian angel concept is clearly present in the Old Testament, where it was thought the angels acted as God's ministers; they were, at times, given special tasks to do with men and their affairs. Genesis (28-29), mentions angels not only acting as the servants of God wreaking havoc on the cities of the plain; they also deliver Lot from danger; in Exodus (32:34), God says to Moses: *"My angel shall go before thee."* At a much later period we have the story of Tobias, and a commentary on the words of Psalm 91:11: *"For he hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways."*

The references to guardian angels are everywhere to be found in the New Testament, so much so that it would seem almost foolish to deny their close relationship with Almighty God and ourselves – and, for sure, they are always on the side of right, acting as 'go-betweens', doing God's bidding in helping us as individuals – even the little children – day by day. Remember the words of Jesus: *"See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven."* (Matthew 18:10). We have examples of angels ministering to Jesus after his temptation in the desert, for there it is said: *"Then the Devil left him, and behold angels came and ministered to him."* (Matthew 5.11). We have a clear reference to the help the angels gave to St. Peter, freeing him when he was chained and guarded in the prison, then again in St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews: *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"* Here St. Paul is talking about the role the angels play in helping us steer a path we were always meant to travel – that towards our true place in heaven.



Bringing the story of 'Jimmy' and his friends a little bit closer to home, the references to our guardian angels, and the help they bring, are again everywhere within Christianity and more recent times. Saint Gemma Galgani, a Catholic 'mystic', stated that she had interacted with her guardian angel, over many years. Her guardian angel had acted as her teacher and guide, at times helping her to avoid falling into errors of judgement. According to St. Jerome, the concept of the guardian angel is in the 'mind of the Church'; he stated: *"How great the dignity of the soul, since each one has from his birth an angel commissioned to guard it."* Honorius of Autun, (12<sup>th</sup> Century), one of the earliest theologians to pronounce on the theme of the angel's role, said that every soul was assigned a guardian angel the moment it was put into a body. It is said that St. Thomas Aquinas agreed with this view, and centuries later, we have the 1997 Regina

Caeli address by Pope John Paul II, and his concluding prayer: *"Let us invoke the Queen of angels and saints, that she may grant us, supported by our guardian angels, to be authentic witnesses to the Lord's paschal mystery."*

#### Answers to the Quick – 10 Quiz, p.27

1. A fielding position in cricket.
2. The French.
3. Noël Coward.
4. Photography.
5. Mice.
6. 212°.
7. Ludwig van Beethoven.
8. (Sir) Edmund Hillary.
9. 16.
10. Jacob.

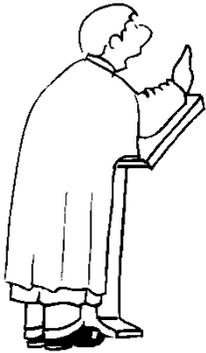
*Angel of God, my guardian dear  
to whom God's love commits me here.  
Ever this day/night be at my side  
to light, to guard, to rule and guide. Amen.*

#### THE ANGEL'S MISSION

Just before Christmas, God was looking down at Earth and saw all of the evil that was going on. He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. So he called one of His best angels and sent the angel to Earth for a time. When she returned she told God, yes it is bad on Earth, 95% is bad and 5% is good. Well, he thought for a moment and said, maybe I had better send down a second angel to get another point of view. So God called another angel and sent her to Earth for a time too. When the angel returned she went to God and told him yes, the Earth was in decline, 95% was bad and 5% was good. God said this was not good. So He decided to email the 5% that were good as He wanted to encourage them, and give them a little something to help them keep going. Do you know what that email said? Ah! So you didn't get one either?



THE CHRISTIAN WAKES AND SAYS: 'GOOD MORNING LORD',  
THE UNBELIEVER: 'GOOD LORD! IT'S MORNING.'  
(Far East – Nov 2011)



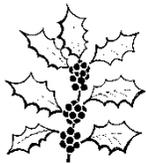
# Odds and Ends!

Why doesn't Santa suffer  
from claustrophobia when he  
climbs down the chimney?  
'Cos he's had his flue jab!

"To those complaining about the  
lack of heating. Can I quote that well  
known Bible verse...  
"Many are cold but few are frozen"



"God rest ye  
merry  
gentlemen...  
"



10. In the Bible, what was the name of Esau's younger twin brother?

*Laugh a Minute! ... The only reason he became a bus driver was because he  
wanted to tell people where to get off! ... I once bought a car designed for  
five people; One had to drive while the other four pushed!*



## THE QUICK – 10 QUIZ ...

(Answers Page 26):

1. What is a silly-mid-on?
2. Which army was defeated by the British at Quebec in 1759?
3. Who wrote the play 'Blithe Spirit' (1941)?
4. Henri Cartier-Bresson became famous in which branch of the arts?
5. If you are musophobic, what are you afraid of?
6. Fahrenheit scale – the freezing point of water is 32°, what is the boiling point?
7. Composer who wrote the Pastoral Symphony (the 6<sup>th</sup> of his 9 symphonies)?
8. Name the man who first climbed Mount Everest with Sherpa Tensing in 1953?
9. How many ounces are there in a pound (avoirdupois)?