



Friends of the Little Sisters of Joy

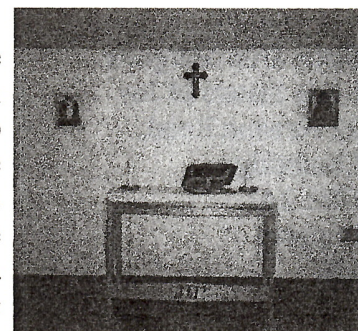
A community of prayer, peace and reconciliation.

Newsletter 2
Spring 2003

Dear Friends,

I am writing this on Ash Wednesday at the beginning of our 40 day Lenten Pilgrimage through the desert to the Promised Land of Easter. Much has happened since last summer; it has been a time of trial as well as much JOY. But the Lord has been gracious and there was a great celebration when Fr. Robert Letellier honoured us by saying the first Mass on the new altar.

It was a simple occasion with 14 people present, among them three Anglicans. Guest of honour was David Frost, a master craftsman from Bottisham near Cambridge. He has adapted the altar to a beautiful marble top from a local stonemason, constructing it from a simple design out of parana pine which has in its heart a red streak. At the bottom of the altar the word *Adonai* is carved in Hebrew. The Mass took place in the first week of Advent and as we gathered in the garden chapel, I could see us all mirrored in the chalice in a friendly huddle. Afterwards someone said it was lovely place, 'to come in from the cold'.



In January we had Mass again. Fr. John Minh, the Vietnamese priest celebrated joyfully, again with 14 in the congregation and this time with Benigna playing the hymns. This was a source of great JOY to us as for 3 months in the late autumn of 2002 Benigna had been laid up with a broken leg. Pam and I and Benigna's family worked together to 'keep the show on the road' and Benigna showed much courage and endurance. Many visitors were received and given hospitality at this time and many gave reciprocal help. In the last stages of Benigna's illness we had a lovely surprise - her granddaughter, Hanna, came over from America and has become an integral member of the household, while she stays until May. Her help around the house has proved invaluable and Christmas was a delight as we sang and decorated the tree.

When I discovered last month that I was to have an operation for breast cancer, I was determined to be positive about it. Now, 4 weeks on, I am in the last stages of recovery and about to go to Malta for a holiday. All the hidden prayers have pulled me and Benigna through. I was deeply touched by my atheist friends who offered their prayers and told them that they were very precious and would definitely be heard! We are very grateful, too, for the strong support network of the family and friends. Now is the time we all need your love and prayers more than ever!

Perhaps the most joyful thing that happened to me since the last newsletter was my recent trip to Poland. It certainly deepened my friendship with Fr Vladimir and his colleagues in the seminary in Cracow where I was again welcomed most warmly. Again I danced in the square, this time to the sound of an accordion and again felt very free. One evening there was a celebration in the Wawel Castle and the chapel was full of nuns singing!

I travelled to Warsaw and stayed there for a few days with a delightful Polish family. On the Sunday my friend and his wife asked if I would like to see the monuments to the Warsaw Ghetto. The former ghetto is a vast area now mainly inhabited by people in flats, but dotted around were large stones with inscriptions in Polish and Hebrew in memory of the people who had perished (in the ghetto). As my Polish hosts and I reached the last memorial of stone, we saw two men huddled over it. They were both Jews, one Polish and one American, who had emigrated to Israel. They saw my cross and when they discovered that I was a Jewish Christian working to bring people together, the American Jew blessed me with the words, 'Dominus Vobiscum'

At last we have a new Bishop, Canon Michael Evans who was ordained on St. Joseph's day, 19th March 2003. Perhaps our community, which is still in formation, and its title not yet officially approved can now go forward. Please pray for our future. *'I know the plans I have in mind for you - it is the Lord who speaks-- plans for peace not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you. (Jeremiah 29:9)*

May the Lord lead you all safely to Passover, Easter and beyond and
fill you with his Peace, Love and JOY.

Shalom

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Icons behind the Altar



Icon on left - *The Annunciation*

Icon on right - *Mary as Guide on the way*

Crucifix - Ivory

'He's sleeping - He's happy' (Hanna)

Beneath the altar



ADONAI