



**'In the JOY of the Lord is your stronghold'**  
**Friends of The Little Sisters of Joy**  
*A community of prayer, peace and reconciliation*  
**Newsletter 1**  
**Summer 2002**



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to send you the first newsletter from 22 Newton Road, Cambridge, especially as it is a while since I have seen you. Our Friends live in different countries around the world. Apart from Great Britain, you live in France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Israel, Jamaica, Australia, Holland- Slovenia. Eire, Iceland, Japan, America, Italy and Canada.

Here is the news over the last 9 months or so.

In October I accompanied the Mayor of Cambridge, Councillor Chris Lakin, to the synagogue in Thompsons Lane on the Feast of Tabernacles. According to the Mayor, it was the first time a mayor had attended a service there. He found the service very moving and joyful and met several members of the Jewish community, including some members of the Reform Synagogue. Hopefully this will be an annual event.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2002 Pam came to live with me in community as a friend. She is an historian, specializing in the Jews of England in the Middle Ages and she hails from New England in the U.S.A. We first met in 1997 at Lucy Cavendish College, where I did my Hebrew degree. Pam has taken over the shopping and cooking, which is a great relief!

Almost as soon as she moved in, we began to give hospitality to visitors and those in need. We were happy to receive the Parish Priest, Fr Tony Rogers, who was welcomed and given a glass of sherry by Benigna, in whose lovely house we live and who joins in a lot of the activities. Fr Tony's visit was soon followed on by a visit from Sr. Jennifer Dines, Prioress of the Canonesses of St. Augustine in Grange Road. This is the community in which I lived for a year in 1991 and who have given me so much support ever since, not least of all by their prayers. Sr. Jenny spent part of the evening discussing the Book of Jonah over dessert; we all wrestled with the question as to whether the plant poor Jonah had sat under was really the same as the one next to the chapel in the garden.

Yes, there really is now a chapel at the bottom of the garden. The musician who played there for eight years left a beautiful space in the wooden 'Box' that came from Walsingham. Over the last few months I have been busy converting it into a chapel. I wanted something distinctly

Catholic but with a universal feel. I struck on the idea of putting up the beautiful pictures of icons of Mary, which a dear friend gave me ten years ago. There is a lovely crucifix, which came from a friend, Sr. Jane; this also is Eastern in style and is made of ebony and ivory. Under the icon of the Annunciation I placed a basket with a terracotta Baby Jesus inside - this was made by Sr. Claire, of The Little Sisters of Jesus in Walsingham from whom much of the inspiration for this community comes. Benigna donated some lovely new red curtains and the Sisters in Grange Road gave me altar cloths and candleholders. All that is needed now is the altar to be finished. A local stonemason has made the top- a four feet slab of marble in stone-grey, and I have just found a local craftsman to make the wooden base. Fr. Tony Rogers has very kindly offered to say Mass for us, as has Fr John Minh, his assistant priest.

Fr John blessed us (and Buster, our angelic dog) and the chapel on St Joseph's day, March 19th Pam cooked a beautiful meal and Fr John pronounced it worthy. (Along with the Polish vodka, which stands permanently on the table since my visit to Poland last year.)



*It looks very much as if the function of the chapel, apart from community or private devotions, will be as a 'sanctuary' for people in distress who need a quiet place to sort themselves out (sometimes with the help of the community) in the presence of God. The woodland around the chapel, the birds and the garden are conducive to inner peace. May I ask for your prayers?*

Pam's big event was that she gave a paper to the European Conference on Medieval Jewry, which met in Cambridge. It was well received and she is hoping that all her work can be turned into a book. She desperately needs funding and I ask for your prayers for this as well. Pam took a group of international students on a tour of the mediaeval Jewish quarter in Cambridge and it was of full of humour as well as information. Her maps, which she produces on the computer, are detailed and colourful and reflect all the hard work she has put into it.

From time to time, Jonathan Gorsky takes time off from his busy schedule in London as Education Officer on the Council for Christians and Jews to spend a day of peace with us here in Cambridge.

Holy Week was special. Pam prepared the *charoset* (ritual food to represent bricks and mortar) for the Passover annual Seder at the big Catholic Church, while I conducted the liturgy, much of which was in Hebrew and reminiscent of my childhood. Fr Tony Rogers presided and there were 60 people present.

In late March Benigna accompanied cello and voice in a concert for peace in our home. I sang with Louise Adams, and Margaret Allan played the cello. The concert raised £71 and is the first in a series; the next one is to be held in October and will include solo piano music from our friend Fardijah Freedman. I went busking in the market square: although it hardly raised any money. I felt people were listening and in some mysterious way it was a 'tikkun haolam' -healing the world.

And so we thank God for all He has brought to us. Friends of all kinds and all faiths, including Muslims, Jews and members of the Orthodox Church. Each person who has sat and prayed in the chapel has enriched it in their diversity; long may it continue.

I have completed a year at Maryvale, my 'distance-learning' degree in Theology.

I spent a fruitful week with the Carmelites in Cornwall and I look forward to another visit to Poland in September.

I thank every one of you for your prayers and we hope to see you in Cambridge one day.

In the love, peace and JOY of Christ.

*Gila*

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