



The Christian Good News responds positively to man's thirst for justice. What then is the justice of Christ? Above all, it is the justice that comes from grace, where it is not man who makes amends, heals himself and others. Conversion to Christ ultimately means this: to exit the illusion of self-sufficiency in order to discover and to accept one's own need – the need of others and God, the need of His forgiveness and His friendship.

Benedict XVI

## *COLW Easter Newsletter 2010*

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Dear Friends,

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN! May this joyful acclamation awake in us the spirit of discipleship that brings the Good News to those we meet in all circumstances of our lives, wherever we are and whatever we do. Hence, in this joyful season and as the Easter octave concludes with the feast of Divine Mercy we want to share with you some of our own good news so you too will be strengthened and encouraged in your following of Christ.

Time goes extremely quickly and it seems just a short while back that we sent out our Christmas newsletter. As you know our community has expanded with the arrival of two new members, that is, Annette and Theresa who joined us in January. Thanks to their 'yes' to COLW in their vocational journey, our anniversary of foundation on the 6<sup>th</sup> January became so much richer, if not for other reasons, except for the fact that there were six of us on this sixth anniversary. That gave us another more positive take on the number 666! Let's hope that it will not take 100 years to become one hundred in number! We went to Walsingham with great anticipation of celebration as some of our friends resident there had prepared a wonderful buffet lunch. Their thoughtfulness, hospitality and generosity were a great gift to us on the day itself. Also, we experienced God's generosity in providing a priest to celebrate Mass for us in the Slipper Chapel. Fr Matt, our Carmelite chaplain, who so much wanted to be with us, was stuck in the London area due to the sudden heavy snowstorm that all but closed the M25. Luckily we had come up the evening before so we ourselves awoke to a Norfolk winter wonderland. Thanks once again to Janie and Michael for offering us the overnight stay – it makes all the difference in terms of driving and, this year, in actually making it up there considering the freak weather!

When we look back over the past year for COLW there is so much to be grateful for. One of the recent gifts to COLW is the strengthening friendship between the Fraternity of Bethany (the FFB's) and our community. In January Sr Camilla, Scott and Erin, a young woman discerning her vocation, went to visit their community in Rome. For Scott and Erin it was the first encounter with this mixed community and

an opportunity to see a joyful expression of lived religious life among so many young brothers and sisters.

Fr Roberto Fusco FFB even managed to come across in March for Sr Camilla's final profession. Having taken her first vows 23 years ago another Italian community she was well prepared to make her final commitment. The Good Lord certainly had put her through a long time of formation! We know she needed it!!

Last summer Archbishop Nichols had endorsed her plan of immediate preparation for the solemn profession and so she left us at the beginning of February for an extended time of retreat and prayer/solitude. Two people very dear to her, Fr Herbie Alphonso and Fr Matt Blake, accompanied her during this time and she would like to express a special thanks to them for being such amazing spiritual guides at this important time in her life.

Sr Gabi worked miracles in seeing to the organisational aspects of the profession itself. She even conjured up a ring from Poland which did need a bit of stretching on the last day to fit Sr Camilla's finger.

We are grateful to the many friends of COLW who contributed with their time and talents to make the day so special. We are writing about it in more length in this letter as many of you couldn't make it on the day and have asked for more details so as to be able taste and experience some of the joy of that day. Bishop John Arnold couldn't make it as originally hoped so Fr Chris Brooks, a long standing friend of the community and a member of our formation team, kindly did the honours. Many noted how well he presided the service which was concelebrated with 21 other priests.

Br John Bosco FFR, Erin and Marcelo kindly shared their musical expertise by playing the instruments (piano, viola and guitar). They were accompanied by Scott, Katie, Annette and Theresa who made up the choir. Many people commented on how excellent the music was. Katie touched everyone with a beautiful solo, whilst Scott led the litany of saints to a tune he had composed with Marcello especially for the occasion. Seeing Sr Camilla lying prostrate before the altar during the litany of saints as she gave herself to God was an inspiring witness to all and there was a real atmosphere of joy throughout the congregation, many of the 400 people present being moved to tears. Fr Matt kept everyone's attention with a deeply inspiring and thought-provoking homily which many are asking copies of. Once we receive the film recording we'll try and transcribe it for those who would still like a copy. A special thanks is due to him again for allowing us to host the event in his parish church and for providing the catering.

We had asked someone in the know whether it would be OK to do a collection during the Mass so as to contribute towards the costs the Carmelites incurred with everything, we were told that it's not the done thing during priestly ordinations or religious professions. Hence, when Fr Matt suggested doing one for COLW at the end of his homily Sr Gabi and Sr Camilla nearly fell off the bench in shock. He had outwitted them!! Anyway, thanks to those of you present for contributing so generously to this collection.

It was good to hear from quite a few people present at the Mass that they felt reaffirmed in their own vocations and although the service lasted just under two hours people thought that it didn't seem that long at all. In this age of lessening commitment to anything that lasts (regarding relationships or life-choices) we hope and pray that the grace of this day inspired many people:

- to believe in love that lasts forever,
- to believe that one can persevere and be faithful with the grace of God to commitments made and,
- to recognise that it is only in saying a total and unconditional YES to life and love that a person reaches maturity, self-realisation and ultimately true happiness.

A special thanks is due to Michael Whyte for filming the celebration and to Marcin for taking the photos. Both Sr Camilla and Sr Gabi got to know them during the tour of St Therese's relics and we are so grateful that at the last moment they said they would be able to make it. Otherwise this momentous event in the life of the community would not have been recorded for posterity.

Sr Camilla would like to thank all of you who sent good wishes and/or a gift for her profession. As many of the cards got separated from the gifts themselves because of the crowds around that evening she apologises if some of you haven't received individual thanks. We would particularly like to discover who it is who gave a large silver relief of Our Blessed Lady with the Child Jesus. If anyone knows anything concerning it please do get in touch with us. For those of you who were not able to join us on the day we are enclosing the prayer card printed for the occasion hoping it will encourage you to keep Sr Camilla in your prayers. She needs them more than ever as she believes the real work starts now and that the Good Lord has plenty of that in store for her.

We also printed in the profession Mass booklet a version of the Act of Entrustment to Our Lady of Walsingham, under the title of Mother of Vocation. We composed it last summer and use it regularly in community. Many people have asked us for a copy of it and for permission to use it more widely. Hence, with minor adjustments to allow for varying life situations we are reproducing it at the end of this letter. We hope that as you pray it it will encourage you to live your own lives vocationally and that you will join us in thanking God as he leads this unfolding of COLW's charism.

If you know of any young adults who may be open to considering a vocation to religious life please let them know about our 'Come and See' weekend from the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May. Details are on the events page of our website. Hopefully, many more young people around the country will respond to God's call to the priesthood and religious life. As once mentioned if they knew how happy one can be in either of these vocations there wouldn't be enough seminaries and convents/monasteries/priorys around to cope with the numbers who'd wish to join.

On this note, we will sign off wishing each of you every blessing today, Divine Mercy Sunday. May the peace and joy of the Risen Christ accompany you and your loved ones throughout the Easter Season. May the Father's love and mercy which Jesus came to reveal, animate every thought, word and deed so that we may be effective Christian witnesses in today's society.

*With love from your Colwelian family,*

*Sr Camilla, Sr Gabi, Scott, Theresa, Katie and Annette*

**ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT  
TO OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM,  
MOTHER OF VOCATION**

*Hail Mary full of grace  
Holy Mary Mother of our Redeemer  
Mother of Vocation, Our Lady of Walsingham  
With great joy we call upon you*

*Remember we are your children  
Called to wholeness  
Called to the fullness of joy  
Called to realise our heart's deepest desire,  
God's dream for us*

*Woman of all graces  
Woman of all Amens  
Woman who followed him  
Teach us to live always in the presence of God,  
Who wills us to become holy.*

*Sustain us, O Mother of Vocation  
On our pilgrimage of faith  
Help us to live the fullness of the call to life and love  
Wherever we find ourselves.*

*Guide us in making Spirit-filled choices  
So that your Immaculate Heart will triumph  
And the Kingdom of God will come  
in this land and throughout the world*

*To you we entrust ourselves  
and all peoples with our hopes and fears.  
Joining our 'fiat' to yours  
May our lives become a constant song of praise  
And thanksgiving to God's glory.*

*O clement, O loving, O sweet Lady of Walsingham  
Mother of Vocation we trust in you  
Mother of England (or country one is in), of all nations and of all creation  
Mother of our community/parish/family  
Pray for us. Amen.*