



# COMPASSION QUARTERLY

*of the Spiritual Association of the Compassionate Hearts of Jesus and Mary*

## **No. 4: MARY at the CROSS 2017**

**WELCOME** to the fourth edition of *Compassion Quarterly*. Since our last edition we have welcomed a number of new Companions and Associates and I am pleased to have welcomed our first member in the USA.

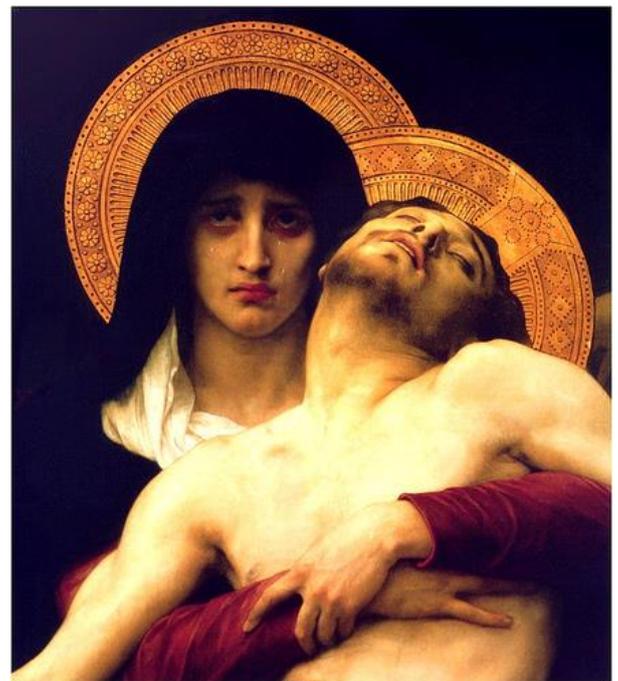
COMPASSION in our world is, clearly, of immense importance at present. Our hearts go out to those affected by the disastrous floods brought about by tropical storm Harvey in the USA; we are equally horrified by the hundreds killed by flooding in India, Bangladesh and Nepal and by Buddhist militants in Myanmar; the refugees dying as they still seek a perilous escape across the Mediterranean; the list goes on. In what had been forecast but what is still disturbing, the UK seems to be bogged down in fractious talks with those who were our European neighbours over Brexit. How quickly all that held us together is being dismantled. But, most worryingly, the growing tension between N. Korea and the rest of the world could lead to a conflict that might engulf us all. It's at times like this that the charism of our small Association, and others like us, is most needed.

'It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion", whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.' (Pope Francis. *Laudate Sii*. 217)

In July I made a retreat at the Franciscan Monastery of our Lady at the Cross in Worcestershire. At the centre of the monastery is a clock tower and, under the clock, there is the inscription: *There stood at the Cross of Jesus His Mother*. This event is commemorated by the church by an annual Feast celebrated on September 15<sup>th</sup> and has given rise to a number of different titles by which Mary is known: Mother of Sorrows or the Sorrowful Mother, Mater Dolorosa or Our Lady of Dolours, Our Lady of

Piety, Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows or Our Lady of the Seven Dolours remind us that the Mother of Jesus shared our sufferings and is with all those who are in need of compassion. It seemed, therefore, appropriate to include Propers for a Eucharist of our Lady at the Cross at the end of this edition of the *Quarterly*.

I'm also pleased that one of our Companions has agreed to allow another of her poems to be re-produced in this edition.



'Devotions concerning the Sorrowful Mother date back to the 12th cent. They were especially promoted by the Cistercians and the Servites, so much so that in the 14th and 15th cents the Feast of our Lady of Sorrows (St. Mary at the Cross) was widely celebrated throughout the Catholic Church. In 1482 the feast was added to the Missal under the title of "Our Lady of Compassion." Pope Benedict XIII added it to the Roman Calendar in 1727 on the Friday before Palm Sunday. In 1913 Pius X fixed the date on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the octave day for the Nativity of Our Lady on September 8<sup>th</sup>.' (from *Our Lady of Sorrows* by Fr. Paul Haffner)



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## Developments

Some **Principles for Compassion**, divided into daily readings, were published in June. Knowing that many will have other obligations and commitments, these reflections are not intended to be a burdensome routine to be undertaken. Rather it is hoped they might be of some interest and assistance in nurturing the great, universal virtue of compassion. Some errors have been pointed out and revised copy will be circulated in due course.

☞ Articles have been published on:

- **'All May, None Must, Some Should'** – reflections on the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession);
- **Gilbert Shaw: A Teacher of Prayer in the Twentieth Century;**
- **Forgiving Those Who Sin Against Others;**
- **An Act of Spiritual Communion;**
- **Devotion to the Sacred Heart** in non-Roman Catholic Traditions.

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The *Church Times* published a positive item about the Association in their June 9<sup>th</sup> edition;

• The following (RC) Religious Congregations have also made a connection with us and our websites are linked:

- *Daughters of the Heart of Mary, Daughters of our Lady of Compassion* (New Zealand) and the Benedictine monks of *Silverstream Priory*.

"Frère, tu dois faire ta stabilité dans le Coeur de Jésus  
-- "Brother (sister), you must make your stability in  
the Heart of Jesus."  
  
(Dom Nathanaël Carron de La Morinai)



*Pieta by el Greco c.1592*

## WHY DO WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS?

The anguish of the Blessed Virgin as she stood at the cross of her son must have been devastating. It is devastating for any mother to see her child suffering and in pain. She even witnesses the suffering of her son in the life of the Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ. One can only imagine what she was thinking at the foot of the cross. Perhaps, every scene from Christ's birth until that moment was flowing through her mind. I don't doubt as she caressed her Son after he was taken down from the cross, that she held him with the all gentleness of a mother, every pain and sorrow permeating her.

As her son was pierced with nails and a spear, so too was she pierced, receiving the grace of sharing in her son's cross by her agony, yet she bore this with gentleness and compassion, and she still bears her sorrows for us now.

Throughout history Mary has appeared in visions, and these visions tell a story of the Blessed Virgin's gentleness in the midst of suffering. In many apparitions



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Mary appears to those who are most in need of comfort, who are dwelling in the abyss of despair and distress. Several apparitions come to mind. The first is our Lady of Guadalupe. The vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe came during a time in Mexico's history when the indigenous people were suffering at the hands of their conquerors. The second vision that comes to mind is Our Lady of Knock in Ireland. In this vision, Our Lady appeared in County Mayo during a period of famine and economic upheaval. Our Mother Mary is drawn to the suffering of her children coming with gentleness to give us comfort, and also to give us hope in her Son.

We live in a world that has many pains and sorrows. We live with many wars going on around the world, and the Body of Christ is suffering terribly from persecution, especially in Iraq and Africa. What can any of us do, but suffer with and pray for those around the world? Only by showing the love of Christ and our love for Christ can this world truly be transformed. Mary shows us how to love gently with courage even in the midst of sorrows and sufferings. She reveals to us the bond of love that she has for her suffering son, so that we may be sharers of that same bond of love and tend to the needs of the members of Christ's Body in the Church who are suffering, just as we too are suffering with them. (*Br. Nicholas Reynolds, OP*)



**The Franciscan Monastery of  
St. Mary at the Cross,  
Glasshampton, Worcestershire,  
UK**

*'There stood at the Cross of Jesus  
His Mother'*

### Love is what I see with

Down the hill into the dreary car park,  
dark oil patched and menacing,  
with jagged slivers of rotting concrete under foot.  
Across the valley a straggling terrace of old cottages  
henna roofed with rusted corrugated iron  
and bungeroosh walls blooming with decay  
like a cancer menacing the old ash trees around them  
with great clouds of fumes pregnant with acid rain  
looming apocalyptic across the misty chill  
of a desolate windswept sky.

Suddenly a shaft of sunlight, and Grünevald's Crucifixion  
metamorphoses into Grünevald's Resurrection.  
The pebbles beneath my feet are made of marble  
polished by a primeval sea become dry land.  
Terracotta roofs and walls of opalescent stone  
framed by graceful tall trees are cosy beneath clouds  
like inky sapphire mountains veined through  
by the last rays of a sweetly fading sun glowing  
as I ride past into the promise of a fine Autumn evening.

How could this be, that concrete becomes marble  
and cold rusty iron can be transformed  
into a warm mediterranean clay?  
Reality may be revealed by the heart's fancy,  
more real than a sharp edged stone;  
and in that moment of revelation  
even the camera may appear to have lied,  
for my heart informs my eyes,  
and  
Love is what I see with.

*Naomi Linnell CHJM*

*[Bungeroosh: a mixture of flint, rubble, old bricks and lime mortar. In England it was mostly used by builders in the Brighton area. If it becomes too dry it crumbles; if too wet it dissolves. Someone once said that "Much of Brighton could be demolished with a well-aimed hose."]*

**"Compassion is not an individual character trait,  
a personal attitude, or a special talent, but a way  
of living together." (Henri Nouwen)**



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### FEAST OF ST. MARY AT THE CROSS

#### Entrance antiphon (Lk.2:34/5)

Simeon said to Mary, This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

#### Collect

Lord Jesus Christ,  
when you were raised up on the Cross,  
your Mother Mary stood close beside you in your passion;  
may your Church, as it shares in your suffering and death,  
come to share more deeply in your risen life  
for with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
you are alive and reign, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

#### A Reading from the book Genesis (5: 9-15,20)

#### Responsorial Psalm (from 31)

**R.** In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;  
deliver me in your righteousness.

Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me.  
Be my strong rock, a fortress to save me,  
for you are my rock and my stronghold;  
guide me, and lead me for your name's sake. **R.**

Into your hands I commend my spirit,  
for you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. **R.**

But my trust is in you, O Lord.  
I have said, 'You are my God.  
'Make your face to shine upon your servant,  
and save me for your mercy's sake.' **R.**

How abundant is your goodness, O Lord,  
which you have laid up for those who fear you;

which you have prepared in the sight of all  
for those who put their trust in you. **R.**

#### Sequence (optional) *At the cross her station keeping*

#### A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (5: 7-9)

#### Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia. Blessed are you, O Blessed Virgin  
Mary; without dying you won the martyr's crown beside the  
Cross of the Lord. Alleluia

#### Gospel (John 19: 25-27)

#### Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, O merciful God, to the praise of your name  
the prayers and offerings which we bring to you  
as we venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
whom you graciously gave to us as a most devoted Mother  
when she stood by the Cross of Jesus.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Preface

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,  
at all times and in all places to praise your mighty deeds  
in the exaltation of all the Saints,  
and especially, as we celebrate the memory  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
to proclaim your kindness as we echo  
her thankful hymn of praise.  
For truly even to the earth's ends you have done great things  
and extended your abundant mercy from age to age:  
when you looked on the lowliness of your handmaid,  
you gave us through her the author of our salvation,  
your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your great and glorious name,  
forever praising you and *saying*: Holy, Holy, Holy...

#### Communion Antiphon (1 Pet 4: 13)

Rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings,  
so that you may also be glad  
and shout for joy when his glory is revealed

#### Prayer after Communion

God, Most High, whose handmaid bore the Word made flesh  
and who stood at the Cross of Christ, her Son and our Saviour,  
we thank you that in this Sacrament of our redemption  
your love and compassion pierce our own hearts,  
strengthen us to stand with Mary at the Cross  
and then with her to follow the path of joyful obedience  
that leads to eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.