



COMPASSION QUARTERLY

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

No. 5: CHRISTMAS 2017



FATHER, I ABANDON MYSELF INTO YOUR HANDS...!

So begins the powerful and moving 'Prayer of Abandonment' of Bl Charles of Jesus (Charles de Foucauld: 1858-1916) whose martyrdom we celebrated on December 1st, the day I wrote this. It is powerful because, if prayed intentionally, we desire, in the depths of our heart, to be wholly given to God. The spirituality of Bl. Charles influences that of the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, a spirituality that is rooted in the Heart of Jesus – the Heart of God – and who have taken the image of that Heart as their own and whose motto is 'Jesus Caritas' – Jesus' Love.

As we approach the time when we celebrate the Incarnation of God I was moved by the thought that this occurred because *God has abandoned Himself into our hands* – he did so on that night in Bethlehem and he does so in every Eucharist. The call to seek to live by Divine Compassion is not simply a desire to be kind to people, though that is part of our calling, but to be moved to embrace the world with love – God's love, not our own. And we can only do that if we are abandoned to that Love.

Those of us who are moved by Divine Compassion might consider using this Prayer of Abandonment – and really pray it in our heart – believing that we are uniting our will and our desire with the Divine Will. That would be a profound gift to God and the world this Christmas and would remind us that, in a world which can often seem cold and compassionless, we are to incarnate Divine Love.

Wishing you a blessed Feast. *John-Francis SMMS*

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures –
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands I commend my soul:
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.

RETREAT 2018

JESU, THOU ART ALL COMPASSION

June 15th – 17th, 2018

at Ascot Priory, Berks



This retreat, set in the context of silence, invites you to enter into the compassionate heart of God through different perspectives – the Heart of the Father; the Heart in Silence; the Heart of Compassion, the Heart's Gaze and the Heart's Softener. The charism of the *Association* will inform this Retreat but it's open to all. There will be a celebration of the Eucharist and half-an-hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for communal silent prayer each day but no expectation that you should take part – just a hope. The conductor will be Fr. John-Francis SMMS

(Cost: £160. A Booking Form is available on request. If you have any questions please contact Fr. John-Francis: cchjm@outlook.com)



COMPASSION QUARTERLY

(of the Companions of the Compassionate Hearts of Jesus and Mary)

Issue 4: MARY AT THE CROSS 2017

OTHER NEWS

Since the last *Quarterly* we have welcomed one new Companion – and in doing so now have a member in Canada - and two new Associates. I have preached two Retreats on the theme of Compassion and the following items have been added to the website:

- **Compassion and Emptiness go Hand in Hand** by Norman Fischer and Thich Nhat Hanh from *'Lion's Roar – Buddhist Wisdom for Our Time'*
- **'Teaching Compassion to Kids'** a response to the increase in knife and gun crime involving children and young people. It offers Four Prayer Practices and Ten Practical Suggestions for parents and grandparents.
- **Managing Fear, Anger and Dislike:** some ideas to develop a compassionate heart.
- **Contemplation and Compassion** – an article by the Rev. Catherine Kerr published by the Shalom Institute for Spiritual Formation
- **Compassion – the biblical gift to the human spirit.** Some thoughts by Johann Metz,



In order to save us, God came to us and lived among us, from the Annunciation to the Ascension, in a close and familiar way. God continues to come to us and to live with us in a close and familiar way, each day and at every hour, in the holy Eucharist. So we too must go and live among our brothers and sisters in a close and familiar way.

The Long Road – Naomi Linnell CHJM

Long days on the dusty road
from Nazareth to Bethlehem,
Joseph led his patient donkey
carrying Mary, great with child,
exhausted, and drooping
like a pale lily wilted in the sun,
now come to a dark silent town,
there to fulfil a prophesy.

There was no room in the Inn
for these tired late comers,
only a stable where oxen slept,
with an old wooden manger
filled with sweet new hay,
a bed for the baby just born
in this blessed oasis of calm
at the end of their long journey.

Oxen and donkey bowed their heads
and quietly watched over him
in his borrowed manger crib
surrounded by a circle of light.
Perched all night in an olive tree
a sleek white Barn Owl cried out
'Rejoice, for unto you a prince is born
in the little town of Bethlehem.'

Blackbirds sang the dark hours through,
while drowsy chattering sparrows
brought soft feathers to the stable,
a downy coverlet for the baby.
Red foxes and yellow necked mice
together watched over the baby
for neither hunting nor death were
abroad this holy night of nights.

Shepherds watching in the fields
heard with wonder the angelic song
telling of God's birth in a man.
Leaving their sheep sleeping peacefully
they walked the long road to find the child,
to kneel with the oxen and donkey,
to greet with awe the God-sent baby
and softly offer their love to him.

Two thousand years have passed,
but the baby born in Palestine
still calls us to welcome every soul,
saint or sinner, simpleton or genius,
for all of us are the children of God.
Touched this night by his Holy Spirit,
let us praise our Father in heaven
and humbly give our hearts to the baby.

