



# COMPASSION QUARTERLY

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

## Issue 3: DIVINE COMPASSION 2017

This is the second issue of our 'Quarterly' although the third time that members and friends have heard from CCHJM – Easter Greetings were sent out in April. However, those of you who have signed up to our Twitter Account #cchjm123 or our Facebook Page will have had regular messages and updates.

### Developments

There's been plenty of interest in what we are offering and how we can be of help to the Church and we are slowly growing. The Bishop of Southwark has given the Association his Episcopal Support and moves are afoot to connect CCHJM with both 'Fresh Expressions' and the 'New Monastic Movement'. We have been accepted as Partners of the international *Charter for Compassion* and of the London Internet Church. Here are some other developments that have occurred since the last Issue:

☞ Associate Nicola M. has written article on **Compassion in the life and witness of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross** and Companion Fr. David Darling one on *Conversio Morum*. Both are on the website and reprinted in this issue. If you would like to contribute something concerning the charism of our Association, please send it to: cchjm@outlook.com;

☞ **Twitter** hashtag (#cchjm123) has been set up where daily tweets are normally posted;

☞ A **Facebook** page has been developed which will contain articles of interest to members;

☞ A **Retreat** for the London Diocesan MU on the theme of *Jesu, thou art all compassion* was conducted;

☞ the **Website** has grown with new pages and content, including an article on the Vow of **Conversio Morum** in the Rule of St. Benedict; the **Seven Sorrows of Mary**; **Confession and Conversion** of the Heart; the **Sacred Heart, Conversion from an Evangelical Perspective**, and **Divine Mercy for All Christians**;

☞ There's also a page providing the **Propers for a Eucharist** of the Divine Compassion of Jesus;

☞ A '**Comments**' page has been added to the website to which Companions and Associates can contribute.

☞ We've published information about how the devotional tradition of observing June as the Month of Sacred Heart might be adapted as a focus for **introducing the virtue of compassion to a church or parish**.

☞ We are developing *Principles for Companions* which are intended to be a daily commentary on our charism.

Lord, my God,  
when Your love spilled over into creation,  
You thought of me.  
I am from love, of love, for love.  
Let my heart, O God, always recognize,  
cherish and enjoy your goodness in all of creation.  
Direct all that is me to your praise.  
Teach me reverence for every person, all things.  
Energize me in your service.  
Lord God, may nothing ever distract me  
from your love...  
neither health nor sickness  
wealth nor poverty  
honour nor dishonour  
long life nor short life.  
May I never seek nor choose to be  
other than you intend me to be.  
*Sr. Marie Schwann CSJ*

### The Bigger Picture

World events show that the need for compassion is as great as ever. CHJM was founded as a consequence of a perceived growth in fear, hatred and xenophobia in the UK but it is clear that negative emotions are affecting both societies and individuals. One has only to look at developments in the USA under their new President and the way that EU citizens in the UK are still being used as bargaining chips (and UK citizens resident in the EU have no guaranteed rights) consequent to Brexit to realise the need for compassion. The rise of the far Right in Europe needs to be countered by people of Faith, yet it appears that many of those who would call themselves Christians are supportive of repressive and xenophobic measures. S. Ignatius teaching about our need for *Agere contra*, a phrase which means "to act against," is of real importance as we seek to encourage both ourselves and all Christians to resist the forces of evil, especially in seeking to make Godly choices.

The phrase refers to acting against behaviours that are not life-giving and hold us back from freedom. Ignatius tells us that we always need to ask ourselves whether the choices we make are made from a place of freedom or whether they are controlled by other concerns.

Edmund Lo SJ writes: *"We can be attached to patterns of behaviour that seemingly make us feel safer, be they our insecurities, doubts, or unwillingness to be pulled out of our comfort zones. They prevent us from living our lives fully in the way the Lord intends. When we live our lives in Spirit and in Truth, we live in a true freedom. Agere contra helps us to confront those things that hold us back from such freedom; better yet, it helps us to grow into this freedom."* It is hoped to include something about the spiritual practices of *Agere contra* in a later article on the website.

Material for the next issue should be sent to: [cchjm@outlook.com](mailto:cchjm@outlook.com)  
before August 31st



**Some of us will be aware that, traditionally, the month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.**

Whilst this will be foreign to some, CCHJM can make use of this devotion as a means of spreading our charism. The particular dedication encourages us to remember God's compassionate love found in the Heart of Jesus: *'To appreciate this rich symbolism of the heart we must remember that in Judaism the word 'heart' represented the core of the person ... the center of all spiritual activity. Here was the seat of all emotion, especially love. As the psalms express, God speaks to a person in his heart and there probes him. This notion of the heart is clear when we read the words of Deut. 6:5-6: "Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength."* (CERC – *Understanding the Devotion*)

Devotion is an often neglected means of deepening faith which, of course, involves both head *and* heart and devotions and traditions which focus our attention on deepening our awareness of God, and God's love for us and the whole of creation, can enliven and nurture our faith and allow us to express our love of God.

### **Sacred Heart and the Evangelical Revival**

Whilst devotion to the Sacred Heart might be regarded as something only for Roman Catholics it's clear that Jesus, who is one with the Father, invites us to live in ever closer union with him and to model our lives on him and his teaching. So devotion to the Divine Compassion might be considered beneficial for all Christians. After all, it was as a consequence of Charles Wesley's heart being "deeply warmed" when he heard

Luther's *Preface to the Letter to the Romans* describing the change God works in the heart through faith in Christ, that the 18<sup>th</sup> cent. Evangelical Revival could be said to have blossomed.

### **Renewing our heart**

The deepest part of God's Being burns with love for each one of us and we, in turn, are set ablaze with love for Him as we seek to love our sisters & brothers and our very selves, in obedience to His word. So here are some suggestions as to how one might observe this Month of Divine Compassion:

- ✎ make a personal dedication to live out of Divine Compassion (see below);
- ✎ consider making your Confession – maybe for the first time (if you are unsure about this, there are some Notes on the website under Aims’;
- ✎ find a practical expression of Compassion – visit or telephone a lonely person; join a campaign etc;
- ✎ each morning re-consecrate yourself to living with compassion in words such as: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

*(A complete version of this article, which might be of use in a Church Magazine etc... is available on the website)*

### **RENEWAL OF COMMITMENT**



Companions are invited to renew their commitment on or around the **Feast of the Divine Compassion** (Friday after 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Feast of the Holy Trinity - June 23rd) using the format provided:  
<http://cchjm.org/forms-of-admission-and-renewal/>

### **ACT OF DEDICATION to the DIVINE COMPASSION**

Love of the Heart of Jesus, inflame my heart.  
Charity of the Heart of Jesus, flow into my heart.  
Strength of the Heart of Jesus, support my heart.  
Mercy of the Heart of Jesus, pardon my heart.  
Patience of the Heart of Jesus,  
grow not weary of my heart.  
Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus, be in my heart.  
Wisdom of the Heart of Jesus, teach my heart.  
Will of the Heart of Jesus, guide my heart.  
Zeal of the Heart of Jesus, consume my heart.  
Mother of the Heart of Jesus, smile on my poor heart.  
Desire of the Heart of Jesus, to you I dedicate my heart.  
Amen.

*Sr. Elizabeth Ruth Obbard, Carmelite Solitary (amended)*



## The Benedictine Vow of *Conversatio Morum*

Unlike other members of religious orders who take the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, Benedictine monks and

nuns take vows of Obedience, Stability and *Conversatio Morum*.

This last Vow or perhaps what is better understood as the third part of the one Vow is usually left untranslated from the Latin because it's difficult to find words in English to translate it. It is often translated as *conversion of life* and this gives a flavour of its meaning for it is about a daily turning to God.

Esther de Waal explains that "Conversatio means to respond totally and integrally to the word of Christ sent to all of us, 'Come, follow me'. Our desire and the desire of the monastic to follow brings about continual inward and outward change.

The Rev. Jane Tomaine writes that: "While stability calls us to remain, conversatio calls us to change and to grow, to be transformed by the spirit. Conversion of Life is a balance to stability and is made possible by qualities of openness that enables God to bring about a change of heart ... Conversatio has an outward aspect - a change of behaviour and attitude - as well as an inward meaning - transformation in the heart where we actually become a different person, a different kind of being. God works with both dimensions. Such change is possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit imparted to us at baptism" \*

As a Benedictine Oblate, I don't take vows but I live in the spirit of the vows. For me *Conversatio* is both an encouragement and a challenge. It reminds me that I don't have to be perfect but I do have to strive for perfection. It challenges me that I can never say that I have arrived, I am always being invited to deepen my relationship with God and to be more deeply united with Christ in my everyday life. I love the phrase I was once told, "God loves me as I am but he loves me too much to leave me that way".

For those of us who don't live in monasteries it is equally important that our spiritual growth happens in the real world with all its challenges. Being a Companion of the Compassionate Hearts of Jesus and Mary, helps me to live out my Benedictine *Conversatio*, for it challenges me to pray for those people and situations that I find difficult so that their hearts are converted and in so doing I too will be changed and given the strength to change reliant not on my own strength but on the grace of God that can transform all hearts.

Fr David Francis Darling OBlSB

(To be published for the Feast of St. Benedict, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017)

" St Benedict's Toolbox (2015) p 96, Jane Tomaine, Morehouse Publishing New York



## Theresa Benedicta of the Cross and the Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Edith Stein (St. Theresa Benedicta 1891-1942) always felt an affinity with Mary at the foot of the cross and prior to entering religious life had spent many hours each Holy Week, praying before a statue of the Pietà at the Abbey of Beuron.

When Hitler came to power early in 1933 Edith soon recognised what that might mean for the Jewish people and wrote, 'I talked with the Saviour and told Him that I knew it was His cross that was now being placed upon the Jewish people... I would [help carry it]. He should only show me how... I was certain I had been heard. But what this carrying of the cross was to consist in, that I did not yet know.' She entered the Carmel at Cologne later that year, taking the name of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a sign of her deep sense of call to share in Christ's Passion. Her understanding of the vocation of enclosed contemplative life in relation to heart-deep compassion for the world deriving from the Divine Compassion, comes out clearly in these words: 'You can be at all fronts, wherever there is grief, in the power of the cross. Your compassionate love takes you everywhere, this love from the divine heart...' and 'Whoever enters Carmel is not lost to his own but is theirs fully for the first time; it is our vocation to stand before God for all.'

Edith had once said to a priest, 'You don't know what it means to me when I come into chapel in the morning and, looking at the tabernacle and the picture of Mary, say to myself, they were of our blood.' And as the above poem shows, she so clearly felt a sense of tender affinity with Mary at the foot of the cross. Like Mary, however full of grief and pain, she remained totally focused on Jesus, and did not flinch when the Nazis came for her in 1942. An inmate of the transit camp at Westerbork wrote afterwards of Edith's brief sojourn there, en route to the gas chambers of Auschwitz, that as she sat and prayed she looked like 'a Pietà without the Christ'. That was the outward appearance; within her Christ was living his Passion - and like him, she reached out in compassion to those with her, calming and quieting children and combing their hair, and, as an official at the camp was later to testify, 'walking, talking, and praying...like a saint.'

Just as Jesus 'gave' Mary to John so, Edith suggests, Mary takes us into her heart and we can offer her a 'home' in ours, as together we journey ever deeper into the burning heart of love that is the Trinity - a heart that longs to reach out in love to a broken world.

Nicola Mason (Companion CHJM)  
Lent 2017