

CHIN NEWS

SUMMER 2022



INSIDE :

'WHAT DO YOU SEEK?' BOOK REVIEW

THE ICON OF THE ASCENSION

HESSLE RAMBLINGS

Welcome to this latest edition of CHN's magazine. It is long overdue – mainly because of LOCKDOWN and THE MOVE...and then getting sorted out! We did produce 2 or 3 newsletters over that period...but our main focus had to be on downsizing!

This proved quite difficult as the volunteers who had offered to come and help us were unable to come due to the lockdown; all the local charity shops were closed so we had nowhere to dispose of our 'pre-loved-but-no-longer-needed' possessions and we were not allowed to have coffee mornings or afternoon tea events with bric-a-brac or plant stalls.

It was all very frustrating but we did manage to dispose of a lot of vestments and chapel furniture to friends, via the ecclesiastical grapevine and online advertising and eventually people were able to come by appointment and browse the library – as long as they were suitably masked and socially distanced. Several shelves were left bare and car boots were filled. A few people even booked to come again. Then at the end of May 2021 we were able to have an Outdoor Sale preceded by an informal Farewell Service led by the Bishop of Derby (Rt Rev Libby Lane). People did pour in for this dual event and a lot of garden equipment and bric-a-brac found new homes and visitors were generous with their donations.

The actual move began in the last week of May 2021 when big furniture removal vans came and went. Beginning on 4th June and continuing over 2 weeks, the sisters moved in groups of 3 or 4, by car, accompanied by a small van for luggage and bedroom furniture.

So, here in Hessle, we now have a new house and garden, a new chapel, a new local community, a new parish church, a new Provincial Superior (Sister Diana), a newish Bishop Visitor (Bishop Humphrey Southern, Principal of Cuddesdon Theological College), a new 'Spiritual Advisor' (Father George Guiver CR) a new lay Trustee (Bill Waddington), new clergy who come to preside at the Eucharist for us, and wonderful new staff (Gill, Geoff, Jane and Gillian) plus agency people in the evenings. We have now been in situ here for just over a year – so maybe the new is morphing into the

current/present...and future. Unpacking and finding our way round took several days! There were a few teething problems – notably a lift which refused to do what it was told so that a couple of sisters were marooned upstairs on several occasions. But most things went to plan and all is now sorted.

People have been very welcoming and friendly and we have very good neighbours! We have had informal visits from Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, Martin and Mike from the Hessle Historical Society and Heather from the Mustard Seed Project. Canon Paul Greenwell led our retreat in January.

We celebrated Sister Liliás' Diamond Jubilee in February 2022 and it was lovely to have her with us. Maggie Jeavons (one of our local clergy) came and stayed during Holy Week and over Easter and presided at the liturgy for us.



*Sister Liliás is blessed
by Father Graham Thornalley*

At the end of March, we said good-bye to Bishops Alison and Frank White as they headed north for their retirement. Alison has been a 'facilitator' for the community for over 15 years and has been a great help and inspiration to us. It was sheer coincidence (or maybe God-incidence) that our new home is just across the road from Hullen House, the residence of the Bishop of Hull.

The appointment of the new Bishop of Hull, Bishop Eleanor Sanderson, has just been announced. She is currently Bishop of Wellington, New Zealand and was here briefly for 'the announcement' and popped across very informally to say hello - but only 3 of us were in. We look forward to getting to know her and her family when she is installed and they move in.

We had an enjoyable visit to the Hull Charterhouse and we took part in Hessle's Scarecrow weekend with Sr Gardenia Flora sitting on the seat by the front door.



Sister Gardenia Flora

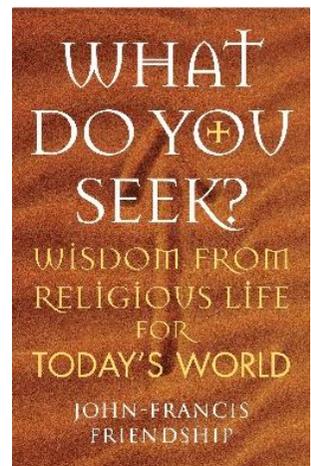
Sisters Irene, Vivienne Joy and Marjorie Jean have all died over the past year. I have realised how much we miss having plots at Breadsall churchyard. We have now negotiated and have burial plots at Tranby Lane Cemetery, which is very pleasant and only a short drive away. We have a new friendly undertaker – and all 3 funerals have been quite different.

It has been a good and interesting year – several sisters are now involved in local churches – Hessle, West Hull, East Hull and Hull Minster and we have welcomed several people for individual quiet days. 'The Lodge' will be available for 2 resident guests in the early autumn and we are looking forward to welcoming old friends - and new ones too.

WHAT DO YOU SEEK?

This is the title of a book by John-Francis Friendship which I have been sitting on for an inordinately long time having been asked to review it for this magazine.

I decided eventually that it would help me to read it more fruitfully if I stopped trying to absorb it inclusively from cover to cover, and decided to visit it fairly regularly as one might visit a picture gallery. There I might drop in on my way to somewhere else, finding time to explore various rooms...skipping pictures that don't attract my attention and revisiting those that keep beckoning



me back. Gradually I might become more adventurous and stay with something that I didn't take much notice of last week, or start methodically to search out a particular area I had hurried through before.

A GALLERY OF INSIGHTS

This book is crammed full of little nuggets of wisdom and fascination, as well as being a very thorough compendium of lots of different approaches to the call of God, who is the One source of all wisdom for all members of Religious communities and indeed for all Christians.

The author has, I discover, visited and/or contacted most of the Anglican Religious Orders whose ethos he explores throughout the book. Some he knows intimately (especially SSF to which he belonged as Brother for some years) and others he may have visited briefly and/or studied their publications. We at CHN remember his short visit to us at Derby a few years back when we found conversations with him both stimulating and sympathetic.

As I visit the gallery of his impressions and treasure-hunting on his journeys around Communities, I find much I could commend to anyone wanting to understand or even tentatively explore the Religious Life. John Francis Friendship writes from the perspective on an insider/outsider. What I mean is, he is inside some of the 'pictures', the subject and the focus; at other times he is the outsider pointing out the intricacies and details of a painting to help us understand it.

If it were not for the fact that I ought to hand in the book for the rest of my sisters to read, I would keep it beside my bed to open when resting or when having a sleepless night and needing something that will point me back to the deep truths of what my vocation is about.

I still have not read it 'cover to cover', but I have seen enough to recommend visiting it frequently.

Sister Pauline Margaret CHN

Sister Irene CHN

Born 4th July 1928

Professed 28th September 1979

Died 24th May 2021

Irene was born and grew up in Haslingden, Lancashire – an only child but with a close extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins who would go for weekend rambles together in the Ribble Valley and beyond. Here her love of nature and the countryside began.

Irene trained as a teacher in Ripon and taught at St James' C of E Primary School in Haslingden, where she had been a pupil. After 20 years she enrolled at Cardiff Art College and qualified to teach art in secondary schools moving to a girls' boarding school in Clitheroe. She began to appreciate the healing power of art and moved on to do an art therapy course in St Albans.



Irene joined the Community in 1976. She was 48 – much older than the other novices and she must have found it very difficult to adapt to our ways, having had a full life doing all the things she loved. She was professed in 1979 and worked in most of our branch houses - Chester, Basingstoke, Newcastle, Nottingham and twice in Keswick from where she organised Painting Retreats, walking holidays and took groups to Iona, Norway and Millport. She was a thoughtful guide and a good praying presence and would have loved to end her days in Keswick – but not so. She also had time in charge of the Guest House in Derby where her love of people shone through all she did and people loved her in return.

In her late 80's Irene's health, both mental and physical began to deteriorate and we realised that she needed more care. But she still linked

up with the local church and endeared herself to the people on Sundays and at the Tuesday Women's fellowship. Again her ready smile and prayerful support was very much appreciated.

Irene had always been a prolific letter writer but lost all interest in sending or receiving mail. She was diagnosed with dementia and needing nursing care - so she moved ahead of us from Derby to Emmanuel House Care Home in Hessle, saying she would be happy to meet new people and see different scenery! Throughout all the time she had to be looked after she never failed to be courteous and gracious. After a fall and a couple of weeks in hospital, she returned to Emmanuel House where she died peacefully a few days later. Hers was our first funeral in Hessle.

The Icon of the Ascension

It has often struck me that while there are multitudes of artworks on the COMING of Christ in his birth, and indeed of his death and resurrection, there seem to be many fewer of his GOING from us at his Ascension. Why was this subject so problematic? I can remember some examples – but even that by the great Raphael is unconvincing. As to lesser works, I remember an illustration in a mass book of the scene; below are the disciples in a row and above them is a sheet of cloud and hanging from it a pair of naked feet. I thought – NO!

But how to depict? What did the witnesses see? I guess each one saw it as God wanted them to see it. For them the earth was flat, with Heaven 'up there' and Hell and the place of the dead 'down below'. I went back to the text from St Luke ***'As he blessed them he was parted from them and a cloud received him out of their sight.'*** That cloud is important. We have met it in scripture before – the fiery pillar of cloud leading the Hebrews from slavery, Isaiah's vision in the temple, bits in the psalms and of course the Transfiguration when his 3 friends saw him in glory with Moses and Elijah and ***'there came a bright cloud which overshadowed them'***. It overawed them too ***'they were afraid when they entered the cloud'***. This cloud is

Shekinah, the ancient Hebrew naming of the Holy Spirit of God moving and making in God's creation – bright, but also for us sometimes dark. We know that cloud of Un-knowing that we meet as we try to classify God and cut him down to size – especially as we pray, or try to.

And what of ***'It received him out of their sight'*** ? Is it solely the actual physical body of Jesus, or is it his whole living, dying and living again, for death could not hold him? Not just what Jesus is but who he is, what today's journalists would call 'the Jesus Event' How does one depict that? – surely not just dangling feet. That cloud drew me to the Transfiguration again, and to one of the greatest depictions of this equally difficult subject – the great apse mosaic in St Apollinare's Basilica in Ravenna. The artist (well over 1,000 years ago) made a timeless design of symbols that would speak to everyone who lived in a Christian tradition – 12 disciples along the base like sheep in stately procession, in a flowery landscape. Above are 3 bigger sheep (Peter, James and John?) and above them, not the figure of Jesus but a great golden cross adorned with jewels – the culmination of suffering seen as glory, as beyond time. WOW!! I stole that idea.

To me, Transfiguration and Ascension are both night scenes, or dusk and dawn scenes, to contrast with the brightness. In the mosaic the Cross is set before a disc of night sky full of stars. I used silver in various intensities (to seem to vibrate in a circle, the upper half of which is outside the picture. The Cross is gold (22ct) and copper. There is also some white. The colours in the 'circle' of disciples below are all in earth colours, umbers and siennas, blacks and dim blues. They make a rising curve that touches the upper circle of light, so that a soft cone of gentle light flows down from the Cross to wrap around the onlookers and sharers in the mystery, including US. For all icons are invitations and the space in front of the icon, where we are, is part of the icon too!



As often, it is instructing to work out the directions of the gaze of the people depicted. Here, the disciples gaze UP at the vision. The 2 men 'in white garments' (code for 'angels') gaze at the disciples, and Mary, the mother of Jesus (always present in the old Orthodox icons of this subject), gazes at us. She, of course, knows well what it is like to have the Holy Spirit working in her. It's as if she is saying 'God made from me the body of the Son, Welcome that Spirit (which is the Spirit of the Christ) within and among you and you will be his body henceforth – a continuing Incarnation. It's up to you now.' As St. Teresa said to her nuns - *"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks*

compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

'While he blessed them he was parted from them and a cloud received him out of their sight'. To me that seems not so much that he went up to heaven but that heaven came down and enfolded and embraced him. The cone of light enfolds us all.

Sister Theresa Margaret CHN.

Ascensiontide 2022.

Sister Vivienne Joy CHN

Born 7th July 1929

Professed 2nd October 1964

Died 20th February 2022



Sister Vivienne Joy died peacefully on 20th February. She moved to Emmanuel House Care Home in Hessle in the summer of 2020. She had been very active well into her 80's but a series of strokes and diagnosis of Parkinson's disease really slowed her down, mentally and physically. She remained cheerful in spite of the frustrations of old age and disability and increasing fragility.

VJ (as she was always known in community) was born in Oxford and grew up in Abingdon where, after a rocky start, she and her 'little' bother Norman became great friends. She attended St Helen and St Katherine's School in Abingdon – a convent school run by Anglican sisters, and kept in contact with the school over many years. She claimed that pupils were

given 'a very healthy approach to life and faith – religion was about daily life, not staying in the sanctuary'.

VJ went to on Whitelands College to train as a teacher and then to Kings College to do a theology degree. She taught general science in a secondary modern school, then biology in a high school and finally went back to her own old school as Senior Biologist.

Later VJ did a diploma in Experimental Educational Psychology at Cambridge. She became a novice at CSMV Wantage for a short time. She joined the Community of the Holy Name at Malvern Link in 1961 and was professed in 1964. During her time in Community VJ moved around a fair bit to different parts of the country where we had smaller 'branch' houses' - Chester, Newcastle, Basingstoke, Nottingham and Oakham. She worked as a hospital and university chaplain as well as being involved in parish ministry. She was a good preacher and led many groups on prayer. She wrote interesting theological articles and always enjoyed reading and study. She spent 2 years with our sisters in Lesotho where she was on the staff of St Catherine's College (teacher training). She borrowed the bishop's horse on her days off to explore the environs.

VJ loved gardens and gardening and was very knowledgeable about plants. The allotment was frequently her salvation and provided her sisters with excellent produce.

VJ had a wonderful sense of humour and could keep us entertained for ages with anecdotes from her childhood and beyond. She had a real gift of words and has left behind a 3 volume life story, all beautifully hand-written and interspersed with photographs. Her address book was very full - and rather out of date! The son of one of her college friends wrote that VJ 'radiated the peace, joy and love of someone who had found their true vocation.' She brought many gifts to our community and we give thanks for her great contribution to CHN.

Hessle Ramblings

Last week we celebrated Corpus Christi in our chapel here, and I remembered how we had celebrated the feast twelve months ago at Derby. It was our last Eucharist all together before the Great Move. In the afternoon David Hemm, a member of the Fellowship took Sr Barbara, Sr Jean Mary and myself to Breadsall cemetery, where the sisters are buried who died during our thirty years at Derby. David had brought yellow roses which we laid on each grave, then we sang a verse of “Lead us heavenly Father, lead us”, rather shakily, said the Lord’s Prayer and went home. It was a sunny summer afternoon and I felt that our sisters at rest were cheering us on.

Next morning three of us set off for Yorkshire, just before we left I copied Marianne Dashwood in Sense and Sensibility and said goodbye to my favourite trees in the garden, and thanked them for their company. As we drove north signs for the Humber Bridge began to appear. I decided they would be very helpful for people coming to visit us in the future. In the event they haven’t been so helpful, as people following the signs carefully find themselves crossing the bridge before they have worked out how not to.



Humber Bridge

The first thing I saw when we arrived at Quarry Bank was a great abundance of trees. Just down the road is the wide Humber estuary with lovely walks along the foreshore and seats every few yards if one should get tired. On the Thursday of the Jubilee weekend 100s of us gathered along the foreshore to watch a flotilla of 70 boats, which had been promised. Unfortunately it didn’t come as the sandbanks on the riverbed move with the tide, and they had moved at the wrong moment. About 5 boats could be seen at the far side of the estuary and everybody

was laughing as we strained to behold them. Also over the Jubilee weekend there was a flower festival in our mellow parish church. Fortunately the flowers were beautiful and very easy to see.

Once a week I go to the other side of Hull to link up with a food bank and church community there. It is very interesting to hear people's stories, which include much of the history of Hull. I have to make an 8 minute journey into Hull from our little local station. As we arrive in Hull the announcer hopes we have had a pleasant journey, I want to reply, "Yes, thank you but rather short." At Hull Railway Station there is an amazingly lifelike statue of the poet Philip Larkin hurrying to catch a train. When I read 'Whitsun Weddings' I understood. Once a month I join a creative writing group run by the splendid U3A. It's very enjoyable, but maybe encourages one to ramble on...

Sister Pippa CHN

Sister Marjorie Jean CHN

Born 17th April 1924

Professed 24th February 1955

Died 9th April 2022

Marjorie Jean was born in 1924 and spent her early years in East Finchley, London. She was an only child and moved with her parents to Evesham where they set up a market gardening business and she began her great love and plants and all things agricultural and horticultural.

She wanted to study and enrolled herself at Queen Mary College, London (where she found the cheapest course – Biology/science/maths – we think). The college was evacuated to Cambridge during the war. She was called to do 'war work' in aircraft manufacturing and became adept with



engineering plans – which proved useful in later years. She always loved diagrams and maps. She also trained as a teacher.

She joined CHN in the early 1950's and was professed in 1955. Initially her time at the convent in Malvern was spent working in the kitchen, looking after the hens and a brief spell at the Home of the Good Shepherd (where we cared for girls who were on probation).

MJ was always a bit of a pioneer - in 1959 CHN was invited to Liberia to work alongside the American Holy Cross Fathers and she was one of the first group to travel there. She spent most of her time teaching but also went 'on trek' to remote villages. In 1962 we were invited to Basutoland (now Lesotho) initially to live alongside a small group of Basuto sisters and integrate with them. Again MJ was among the 1st group who went there and worked wonders in the garden, initiating an irrigation project. After 5 years she came back to England and taught at St James' School West Malvern until 1970.

Later that year MJ returned to Lesotho to begin what was to be her 'life's work'. At the Convent in Leribe she became the Bursar, responsible for finances and buildings. She pioneered the Leribe Craft Centre (which is still in existence today), encouraging local women weaving with mohair and selling their goods – involving and supporting handicapped workers within the project. She also travelled far and wide with Fr Brown (the community's chaplain) to find new outlets for their wares. This 'business enterprise' began to flourish. Later MJ became the Principal of St Mary's Home Economics School in Leribe and continued there until 1995 when she came back to England. She was given a great send-off and a lovely hand-woven banner 'Farewell Lesotho - 33 years'. By this time the convent had moved to Derby where she became the assistant bursar – spending a lot of her time fixing things, often in a rather Heath-Robinson way.

By now MJ was in her 70's but the pioneering spirit had not left her and she and Sister Judith were the first 2 sisters to set up house on the Welland estate in Peterborough – where they were involved in the local church and

in the local community. In addition MJ gardened and grew a lot of vegetables. She then had a spell in Keswick where she endeared herself to the locals and joined an art group where yet another talent was able to flourish.

The Keswick house closed in 2009 and the sisters returned to Derby. MJ, now well in her 80's, hosted the meetings of the Julian group which met at the convent. She joined several art groups in nearby villages and had a weekly session teaching an elderly lady to draw and paint. She also went to Keep Fit classes and was an intrepid traveller round Derbyshire with her bus pass as she was around the Lake District when in Keswick.

Last year CHN moved to Hessle . Like most of us MJ was excited, though maybe slightly apprehensive, about the move and she would exercise, walking round the perimeter of the house on her 'pusher', several times a day, viewing the garden with her critical eye as she went. Gradually her health began to fail – angina, loss of hearing and sight, then mobility – she began to say 'All I can do now is to pray' which of course she did. I hope she can also look back over her life and ministry with great thanksgiving. She has touched the lives of so many people, both in this country and in Africa – we have had many letters in appreciation of her – even in her 90's people enjoyed her conversations, her encouraging words her 'wicked' sense of humour and her lively personality, her extensive breadth of knowledge and awareness of the world around her. Hers was a full and rewarding life.



**Bishop Humphrey presiding at
the Blessing of the new
Community House**



Members of the Fellowship on a Visit



Archbishop Stephen Cottrell's Visit



**Our New Provincial Superior,
Sister Diane CHN**

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